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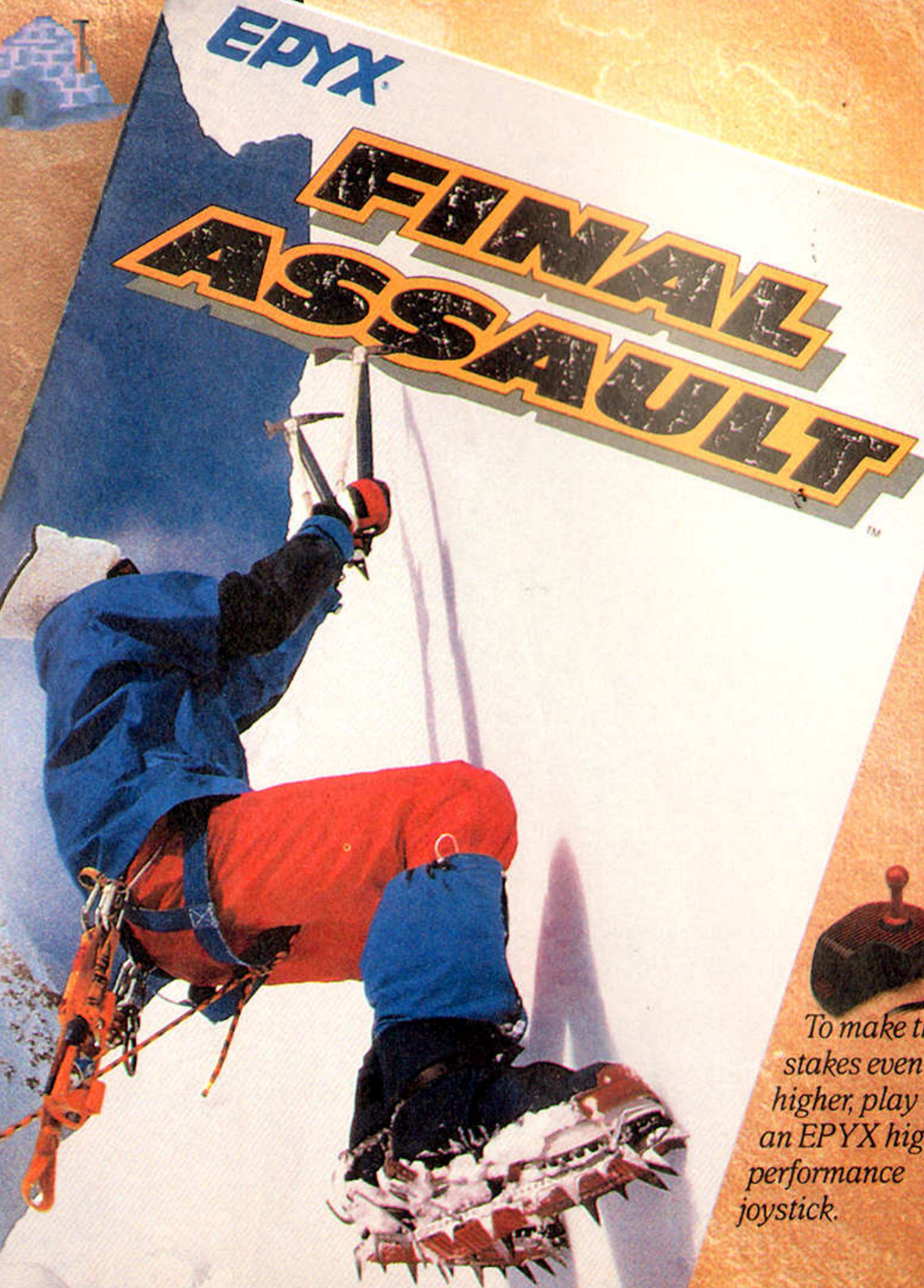
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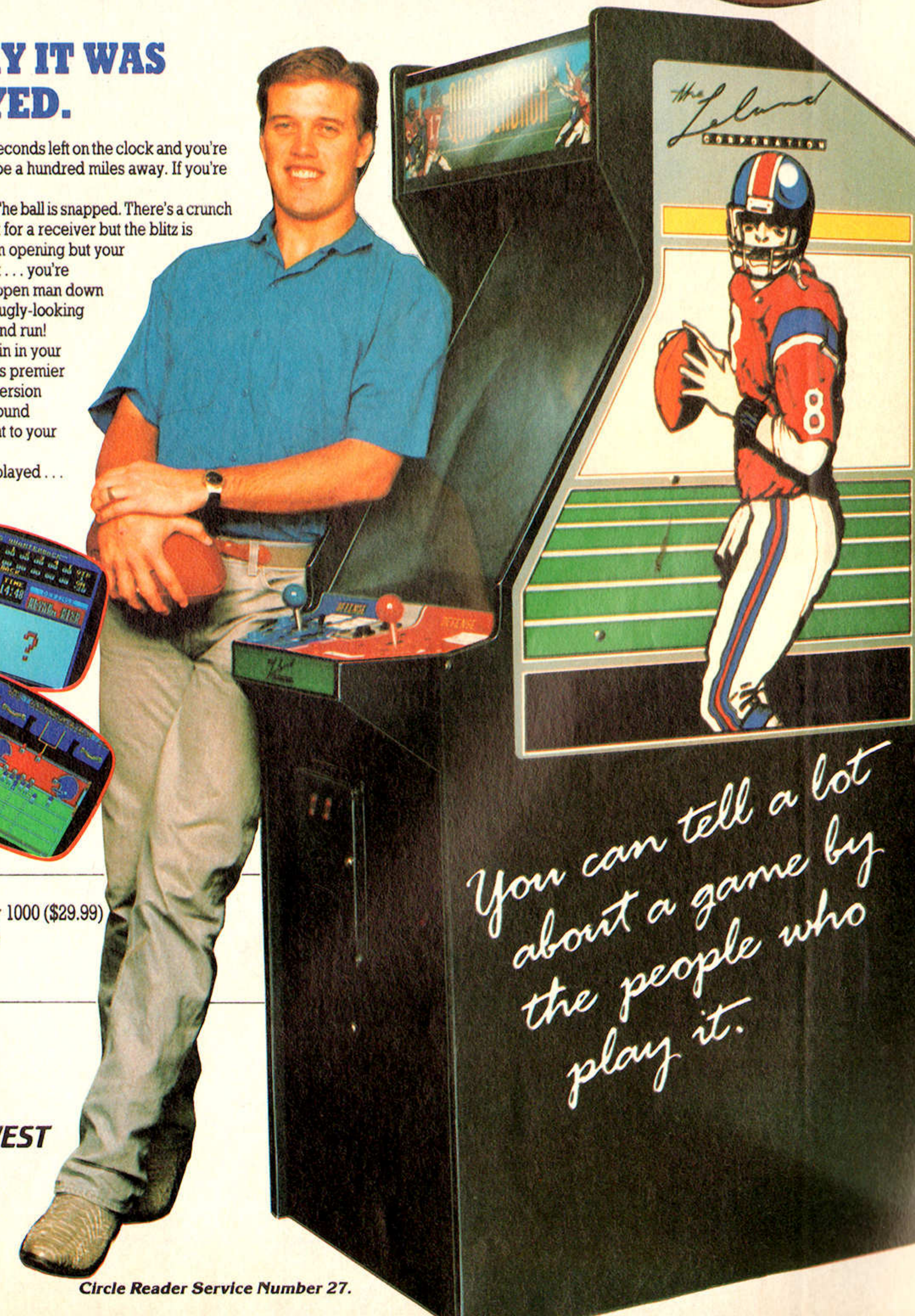


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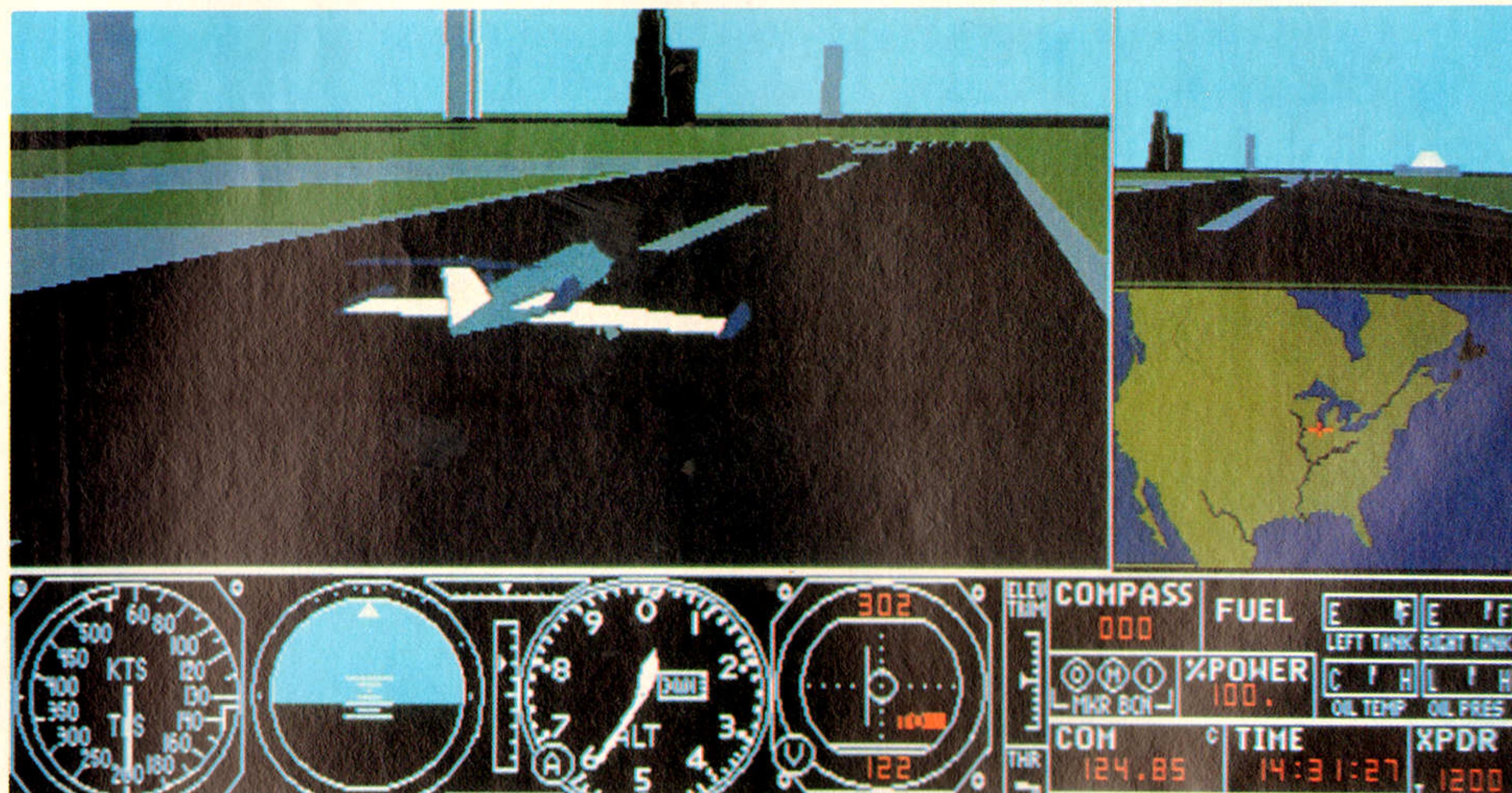


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You can tell a lot about a game by the people who play it.

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ARCADE CROSSOVER 54 Double Dragon scores a hit.

ON THE COVER

New graphics for Spectrum HoloByte's Falcon F-16 AT version (newly released) are stunning. The game is not reviewed in this special flight simulator issue because it was just covered in our September issue, but the graphics are so good we wanted to give you a look.

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Editor's Page

Best of the Year Balloting

Greetings. The long vacation I had anticipated taking from this page was cut short when I realized that someone would have to tell everyone about the first COMPUTER PLAY Best of the Year Awards. And what better person to do that than the person responsible for it all.

So here I am again. By the way, I hope you all enjoyed the guest editorial that appeared in this space last month that was contributed by Ken Wasch, the executive director of the Software Publishers Association. Anyone wishing to receive a reprint of Ken's editorial on software piracy or the SPA booklet "Software Use and the Law" can send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Software Piracy, Software Publishers Association, Suite 901, 1101 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Back to the awards. As in every industry, it is customary to recognize the top performers with some type of annual award or recognition. So, we here at COMPUTER PLAY decided to have our own version of an awards program for our industry: entertainment software.

And to make it really interesting, we thought it would be a good idea to include you, the consumer, in the selection process. You've probably all wished at some time or another that you could vote in the Grammy or Oscar selection process, so here's your chance to vote for an award that's REALLY important.

Here's how it's going to work. Our esteemed editorial staff is going to determine the categories in which awards will be presented. At press time, we were still trying to decide exactly what those categories would be. Then, our writers will send in to us their top six picks in each category. From this list the nominees will be chosen. In the December issue of COMPUTER PLAY will be a ballot with all of the nominees on it and boxes for you to check off your choices for the best games of 1988. All of the ballots that are received by us by December 31, 1988 will be tabulated and the winners will be announced. Because of our deadline schedule, the winners won't be listed in the magazine until the March, 1989 issue of COMPUTER PLAY, so you'll have to wait a while for the results of the balloting, but a few lucky people will hear from us before then.

That's because the publisher of this magazine, in an unbridled demonstration of generosity, has decided that our readers

should be given another incentive to send in a ballot with their choices. So, COMPUTER PLAY will be having a drawing using the ballots that are sent in by you. Ten winners will be picked in the drawing and each one of the winners will receive a copy of each of the games that are the best of 1988. Since we're still deciding what the categories will be, it still hasn't been determined how many games each winner will receive, but odds are it will be at least 12 to 15 games. That's a lot of games, and, of course, these aren't just any games, they're the best of the year.

So, doesn't it make sense to send in a ballot? Of course it does, and please make sure you follow all of the instructions that will appear on the ballot page in the next issue. In addition, 25 other winners will also be chosen and will receive a free subscription to COMPUTER PLAY for one year. So make sure you send in a ballot and become eligible to win one of these prizes and help us pick the best of 1988.

Also, if you'd like to receive a free game and get a subscription to COMPUTER PLAY, check out our subscription offer on page 48. You can get a free game from DataSoft with every one year subscription you buy. These are new top quality games, too, not discontinued titles or older titles.

One more thing before I go. Any magazine that chooses to review products based on their intrinsic worth and value to the consumer will always find itself in a position of controversy. Consumers and manufacturers alike will disagree with our assessment of products for a variety of reasons. This goes with the territory and we accept it. What we try to do with our reviews is to give the consumer an idea of what the game is about, whether it lives up to the promises it makes, and whether or not it is a good value for the money.

We try to maintain a high degree of consistency from review to review and our rating system helps us a great deal in doing this. However, each reviewer is obviously a little different and sometimes inconsistencies can occur. I just mention this because I want everyone who reads this magazine to realize that we are constantly trying to upgrade our rating system and insure that all reviews are handled as objectively and consistently as possible. We are always looking forward to bigger and better things for COMPUTER PLAY and so far, in the words of a famous TV personality, we thank you for your support.

Letters

Send letters to the editor to: Computer Play, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076

Kudos

All that I really have to say is that your magazine is P-E-R-F-E-C-T. I am a regular gamer on computer and Nintendo and your reviews really help me. Thanks.

Charley Wendig

New Subscriber

Enclosed is my check for a one year subscription. Congratulations on your magazine. I found it to be well put together and very informative. I am very glad to see that the market will support another gaming magazine, since I am generally too busy designing games to play as many as I would like. I especially like your emphasis on reviews — I expect it to be a great help. Thanks.

Greg Johnson
San Rafael, CA

More Kudos

I think your magazine is superb. Ever since we got our Apple IIs, I have searched near and far for a magazine which reviews computer games. I think I shall become a regular customer of yours. In your first issue I loved the reviews on The Three Stooges, Ultima V, and Bard's Tale III. I liked your articles discussing Nintendo games and foreign software and I also liked the way you rated the games. I hope you will review Platoon and Wasteland soon.

Jason Holmes
Port Matilda, PA

Mixed Reactions

I just picked up your premier issue and after reading it I thought I would send you my comments.

First, what I liked:

The reviews of the games are well-written, interesting and spotlight important features that are both good and bad about the games. The rating system is a good idea and easily comprehensible.

You review a wide range of computer games for all interests.

The style, format and overall look of the magazine has much potential in my opinion. What I didn't like:

The reviews are too split up. While having

to flip a few pages may seem trivial, it does get a bit irritating and tends to break up the continuity of the material.

Why do you insist on being biased toward IBM-PC format software? You should have no bias whatsoever. Are you doing this simply because of the large number of IBM users? It is frustrating when you own a computer like the ST or an Amiga (which I own) and you purchase a magazine that you think will be representing the whole computer community only to find it biased toward IBM. I suggest you give each computer's software a fair share of reviews.

Get rid of the Nintendo reviews and ads! The Nintendo Entertainment System is NOT a bona fide computer system. Are you pushing Nintendo because of the large market? Shame on you. When you publish a magazine called COMPUTER PLAY and then stick Nintendo information in it (without letting anyone know about it on the cover) your representation seems a bit incongruous. Are you a computer magazine or not? I suggest you remove Nintendo and stick to bona fide computer software.

Well, that's it. With a few changes, you could become a magazine I purchase every month, or even subscribe to. I am interested to see what other readers think of your magazine, so I'll have to purchase next month's issue.

James Hale
Utica, NY

James brings up some interesting points. The reviews from now on (as you can see in this issue) will be split up only if absolutely necessary. We are only slightly biased toward the IBM market and as the magazine gets bigger pagewise, more reviews will appear on other formats. The two preceding letters indicate that some of our readers like seeing Nintendo information in the magazine, so we're not really sure where to go with this question. Nintendo, in any case, will only be a small part of our total editorial content but we feel it's important to include it because of the growing number of games that cross over from computer formats and vice versa. Don't worry. We'll be keeping a close watch on all of these points. Thanks for the input.

Errata

We goofed in our last issue when we listed the price of John Elway's Quarterback as \$44.95 instead of the much lower price of \$29.95 which is correct. Also, the scores of "7" which were given to several categories in the scorecard were labeled as being "average" instead of "good" which they should have been. We regret both of these errors.

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Industry News & Views

By Rusel DeMaria

No Copies, Please.

One big step I want to mention is the development and adoption by several companies of a new copy protection scheme. First developed for military and government purposes, it is a special paper that can't be duplicated by ordinary photocopy machines or FAX. Developed in Canada by Norman Gardner and Michael Voticky, this paper is chemically treated during manufacture with optically treated dyes. The effect is that the paper reflects back the light too quickly for the photo copier to reproduce the image. There are various grades of the paper, but even at its lowest grade, photo copies are unreadable. The cost of paper adds about 20 to 25 cents to the cost of the software according to Nocopi International Inc. President Norman Gardner.

I favor this type of copy protection over electronic disk-based methods. At least there is no way to mess up the operation of your program because of copy protect, and the method works equally well with products for all systems. Currently Sir Tech was the first to try the scheme, and as of this writing Lucasfilm Games, Mediagenic, and Accolade are all going to give it a try. Gardner tells me that there is a new, even more readable version of the paper in development which should be marketable within a year.

Contests Contests are in.

Both Mindscape and Sierra On-Line are running contests. Mindscape's Balance of Power Campaign Sweepstakes is a no purchase necessary drawing in which the winner gets a trip for two to Washington, DC during the time of the presidential inauguration. Air fare, hotel for two, a tour of the city, and \$500 spending cash are all part of the prize. Send in entries on 3 X 5 cards to Balance of Power Campaign Sweepstakes, P.O. Box 1238, Skokie, IL 60076-8238. All entries must be received by November 30, 1988. Sierra's Master Adventure Contest is open to those who send in the secret code number that can only be obtained by playing **King's Quest IV** to the end and achieving a perfect score. The grand prize is an all expense paid trip to England for a tour of historical sites. There are also many other prizes being offered. Send in your entries before March 31, 1989.

Editor's Note: DataSoft is also sponsoring a no-purchase necessary contest which has a trip to Hawaii as the grand prize. Contact your retailer for further details or DataSoft directly.

Titles, Titles, Titles . . .

Speaking of Mindscape and Sierra On-Line, both have some new titles coming. Mindscape will be releasing a Sega game title for the C64, **Outrun**, eventually for the ST and the Amiga, and **Space Harrier**, an action game in which you play an extraterrestrial warrior who must save the land of dragons from the vicious followers of the vile one-eyed mammoth. It's billed as action from start to finish.

Sierra's **Police Quest** has been featured in October's Law and Order magazine as a tool for teaching police recruits proper procedures. In other Sierra news, **Gold Rush** should be out now on IBM, Atari ST, Mac, and Apple IIGS. **Manhunter** on several

systems, **Leisure Suit Larry II**, **Police Quest II Space Quest III**, **Helicopter Simulator**, and **Silpheed** are all coming out on various systems. Looking forward, Sierra has been kind enough to let us know about some games scheduled for around March of 1989. **Hoyle's Book of Cards** sounds like card games to the max while **Legends in Folklore** takes us into the world of Paul Bunyan and other folk characters. Roberta Williams is working with another author to create a mystery game called **Murder in the Southern Quarter** which will be set in New Orleans.

Electronic Arts is pumping out the titles, both their own and those from their affiliated labels. The big news is **Jordan and Bird: One on One**. . . On the sillier side, there's the **Cave Man Ugh-lympics** which features such prehistoric events as the Mate Toss (toss your husband or wife for distance), fire starting, dino vault and more. **Zany Golf** should be out now for the Apple IIGS. **Sentinel Worlds: Future Magic, Mars Saga, Modem Wars, John Madden Football**. New versions of **Skate or Die**, **Strike Fleet**, **Star Flight** will also be appearing.

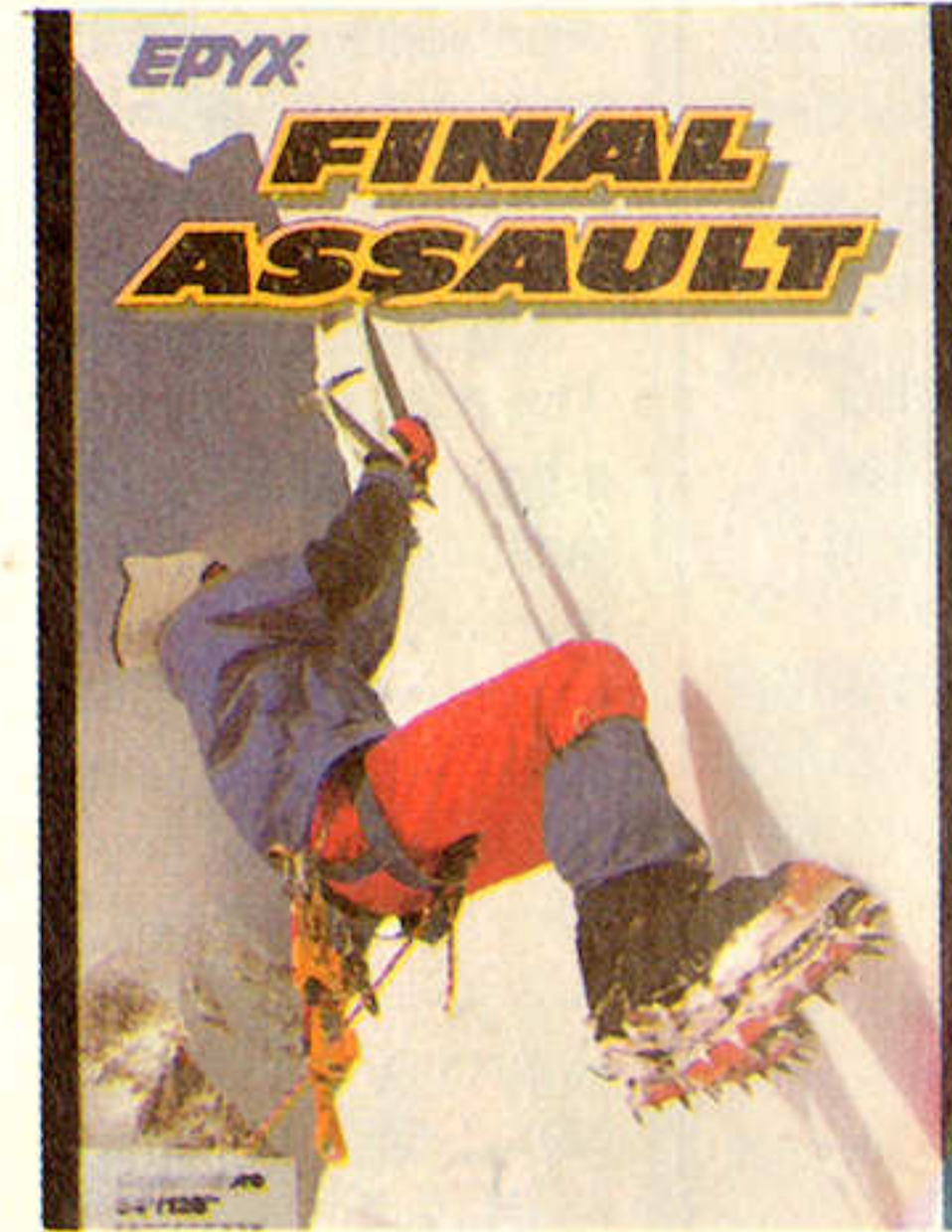
EA's affiliated labels (A.L.) include DataSoft which is releasing **Annals of Rome**, **The Android Decision** (pitting one warring robot city against another in an arcade format), **Fire Zone** (a graphic adventure set in the 21st century with preset or design-your-own scenarios), **Napoleon in Russia**, **Cosmic Relief: Professor Renegade to the Rescue** (adventure that moves from the future back to the past to avoid world destruction), **Scavengers** (an adventure game set in the 22nd century in which you must search a devastated land for objects of survival and interest), **Graphics Companion 2**, **Sorcerer Lord** (a fantasy war game which uses artificial intelligence techniques to make your computer opponent tougher to beat. Includes an ancient magical land, and evil enemy sorcerer), and finally, **Battle Droids** (a 3D animated robotic gladiator game in which you must maneuver a trio of remote control droids through various war zones in a digitized landscape. Complete a whole row of war zones on the battle grid to win the game). DataSoft is also releasing new ports of **Hunt for Red October** and **Rubicon Alliance**.

Another A.L. is Paragon who, in addition to new ports of **Twilight's Ransom**, **Alien Fires**, and **Razor**, has two new titles coming out. **Wizard Wars** has you battling the evil wizard Aldorin to recover the stolen white unicorn and reunite it with the black unicorn to set the world right again. This is a 3D scrolling adventure that requires you to travel through 30 magical kingdoms collecting objects and magical spells. **Guardians of Infinity** has you travelling from the year 2087 back to 1963 in an attempt to thwart the assassination of John F. Kennedy and save the world of the future from destruction. In this graphic/text adventure, you can encounter 125 historical characters, even confronting such people as Lee Harvey Oswald, and JFK himself.

SSI is coming out with **Heroes of the Lance** for the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons series in several formats, also new formats of **Pool of Radiance** and several versions of Master's Assistant Volume I for AD&D players. War simulation includes **Battles of Napoleon** on several systems.

Double Dragon is coming from Arcadia, another A.L., and it sounds as if it will feature one or two player modes.

Epyx was able to release **The Games: Summer Edition** in time for the Summer Olympics in Seoul. **The Games** include Archery, High Hurdles, Rings, Parallel Bars, Cycling, Hammer Throw, and Diving in a format similar to former Epyx titles. They have also released a unique game, **Final Assault**, which takes you to the tops of mountains the hard way — with ropes and pitons. This mountain climbing simulation is the first of its kind. It's nice to see new ideas in gaming.



Accolade reports monster sales on their **Test Drive**, **Hardball!**, and **Mean 18** products and have announced some new titles. **Fast Break**, by Steve Cartwright is a basketball simulation. **Serve and Volley** is described as a thinking man's tennis simulation, not just a glorified Pong game. It requires planning and appropriate shot selection. **Rack'em** is a billiards simulation that is billed as being very intuitive and easy to use. **Jack Nicklaus Golf** is unique in that there is a video tape available which has Nicklaus himself playing the same 18 holes as those in the game. Looking forward a bit, Accolade is coming out with some other titles like **Saber Strike**, a flying simulation that puts you in charge of an F86 fighter during the Korean War, **Steel Thunder**, a tank simulation game, and **TKO**, a split screen boxing game which lets you see your opponent and yourself in split images. **4th and Inches** will be coming out on Mac, IBM, IIGS, and Amiga along with team construction disks for each version.

Mediagenic has released quite a few games in the past months, and is looking to release many more. **Ocean Ranger**, **Manhole**, and **Pete Rose Pennant Fever** are out on the Activision label. Also **ZakMcCracken** has shipped and **F18 Hornet** and **Space** from Absolute Entertainment. **Might and Magic II** is shipping on Apple and C64 with a DOS version soon. A C64 version of **Predator** should be shipping (an NES cartridge coming later). For new systems: **Carrier Command**, **Corruption**, **StarGlider**, **Last Ninja**, and **Rampage**. Interplay should be shipping **Battle Chess** and **Neuromancer** (with a soundtrack by Devo), and MicroIllusions is coming out with **Turbo** and **Shrine of the Demon Soul**. The new Sega agreement (see Sega) will bring three titles out by

the end of the year: **Rampage**, **Cyborg Hunter**, and **Super River Race**.

Vic Tokai is a new company. Among their projected titles: **Golgo**, **Bump N Jump**, **Aiginas Prophecy**, **Chesterfield**, and **Terracresta**. At this point we know that titles will be out for the C64 and some for Nintendo.

Broderbund should have released **Downhill Challenge**, a skiing simulation, **Star Wars** for C64, Amiga, and ST, **Show-Off** for the IIGS, and **Ancient Art of War at Sea** for Mac and other systems.

Spectrum Holobyte is bringing out **Falcon AT**, especially optimized for faster AT class IBM compatibles, also versions of **Falcon** for C64, Amiga, and ST. New versions of **Tetris** are due out, including Mac II, Amiga, and ST. **PT 109** is coming for IBM, C64, and Apple IIGS, and **Oribiter** is coming for the ST.

Sir Tech is releasing **Wizardry V, Heart of the Maelstrom**, which takes you on a new quest to save the Gatekeeper from his prison in the Magical Vortex of the Maelstrom. To do so, you'll have to defeat the Evil Sorn, a powerful enemy. You'll lead your six adventurers through a set of asymmetrical mazes (yes, asymmetrical!), into deep pools and through the usual endless confrontations and challenges. Also from Sir Tech is the text adventure **Mines of Kintar**.

Acclaim is doing hot business with **Rambo** and **Wizards and Warriors** for the Nintendo. Three new announced titles include **Empire City**, a gangster story, **Air Wolf**, and **WWF Wrestlemania** with the likes of Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant as endorsers. Since starting in 1987, Acclaim has already gone public and has achieved very substantial success. A new division is developing interactive VCR games. The first ones will be **PGA Tour Golf** and **WWF Wrestlemania**. Interactive VCR games will feature real footage linked into a game. For instance, the golf game allows you to play a PGA course and even includes a putting cup so you can put away the final put on each hole. Acclaim has deals with various sports governing bodies like WWF, PGA, NFL, NBA, and so forth.

Sega tells us that they have some new games including **Golvellius** (a Zelda-like game), and **Phantasy Star**. We expect to get a look at these games soon. In addition, Sega spokespeople have confirmed that Mediagenic will be a licensee for Sega games. Look for Sega versions of Mediagenic games next year.

Nintendo has told us to expect **Legend of Link** (Zelda II) and **Super Mario Bros. II** for around December.

Speaking of Nintendo, a company called Play It Again publishes a buy and sell catalog for used NES cartridges. Average purchase price is around \$8. Average sale price is around \$20. All cartridges that go out include a one year warranty for defects in the cartridge. To get the catalog, write to Play It Again, 67-25B 186 Lane, Flushing, NY 11365 and enclose two 25 cent stamps.

Konami has released **Life Force** and **Metal Gear**. They are working on a racing game, but they tell us that they have sent the game back to Japan for some modifications. It seems that many of the racing cars were sporting cigarette ads, and they didn't want to promote smoking. We like that kind of socially conscious attitude, and appreciate that kind of concern.



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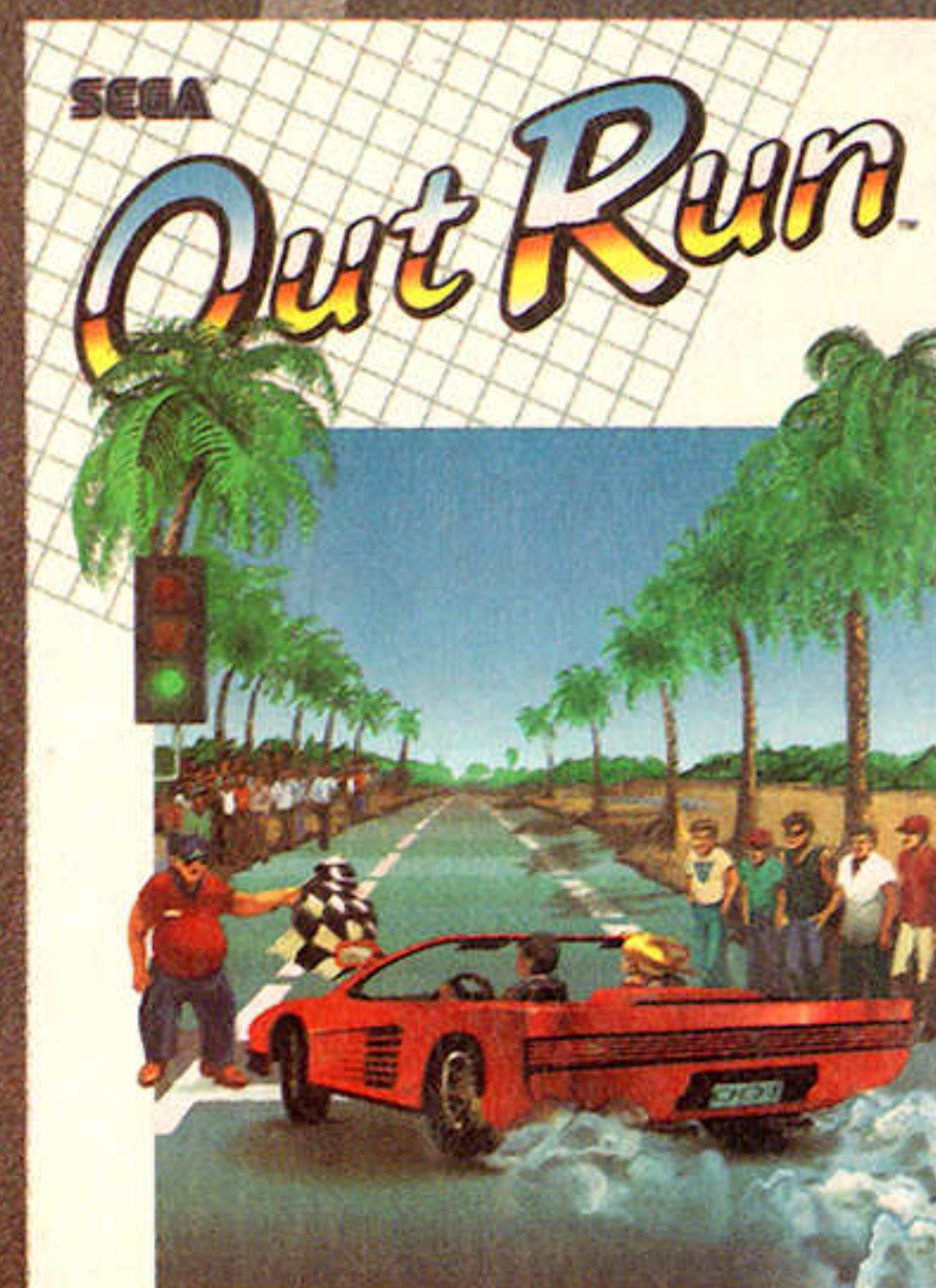
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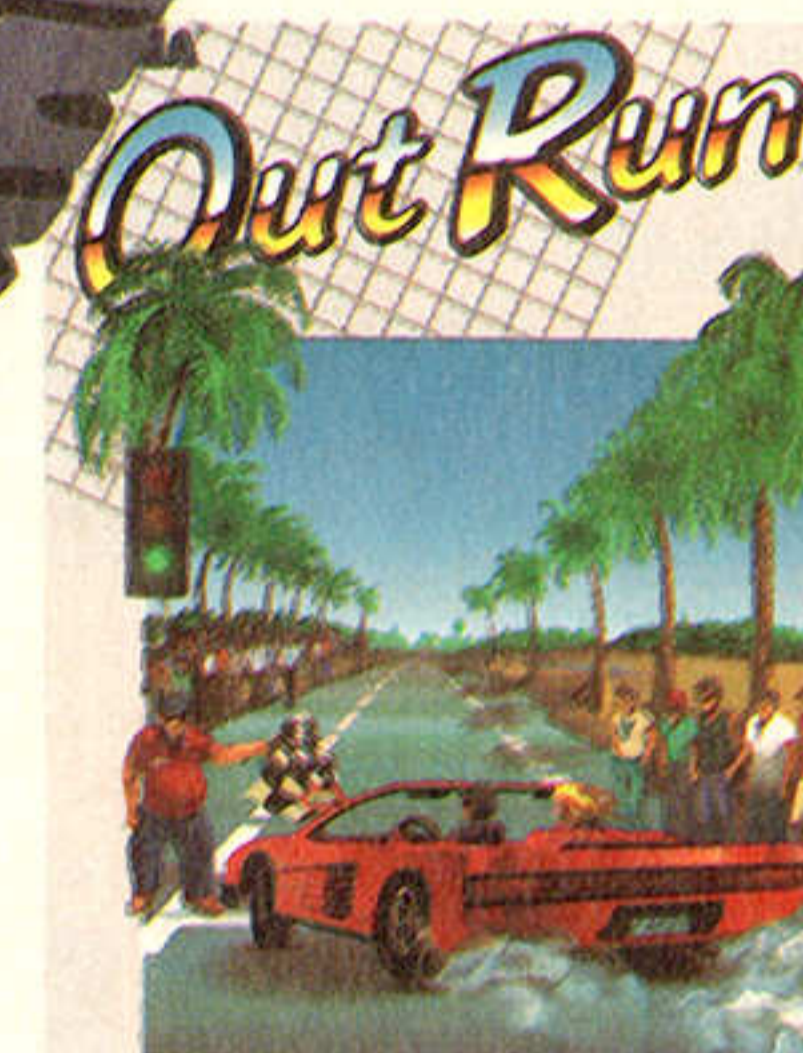


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Piece Things Together Soviet Style

By Dr. Michael W. Ecker

Question: What comes from the USSR, is available in the USA, and makes your score go up as the pieces fall down?

The answer is **TETRIS**, SPECTRUM HOLO-BYTE'S highly ballyhooed, but surely unusual, new program.

To be sure, this software is almost in a category all by itself. Said to be developed by two Soviet programmers, **TETRIS** is a game in which falling pieces fill up a large rectangle. The idea is to position the pieces — using either joystick or keyboard — so as to fill up as much of the rectangle as possible, leaving as little blank space as you can.

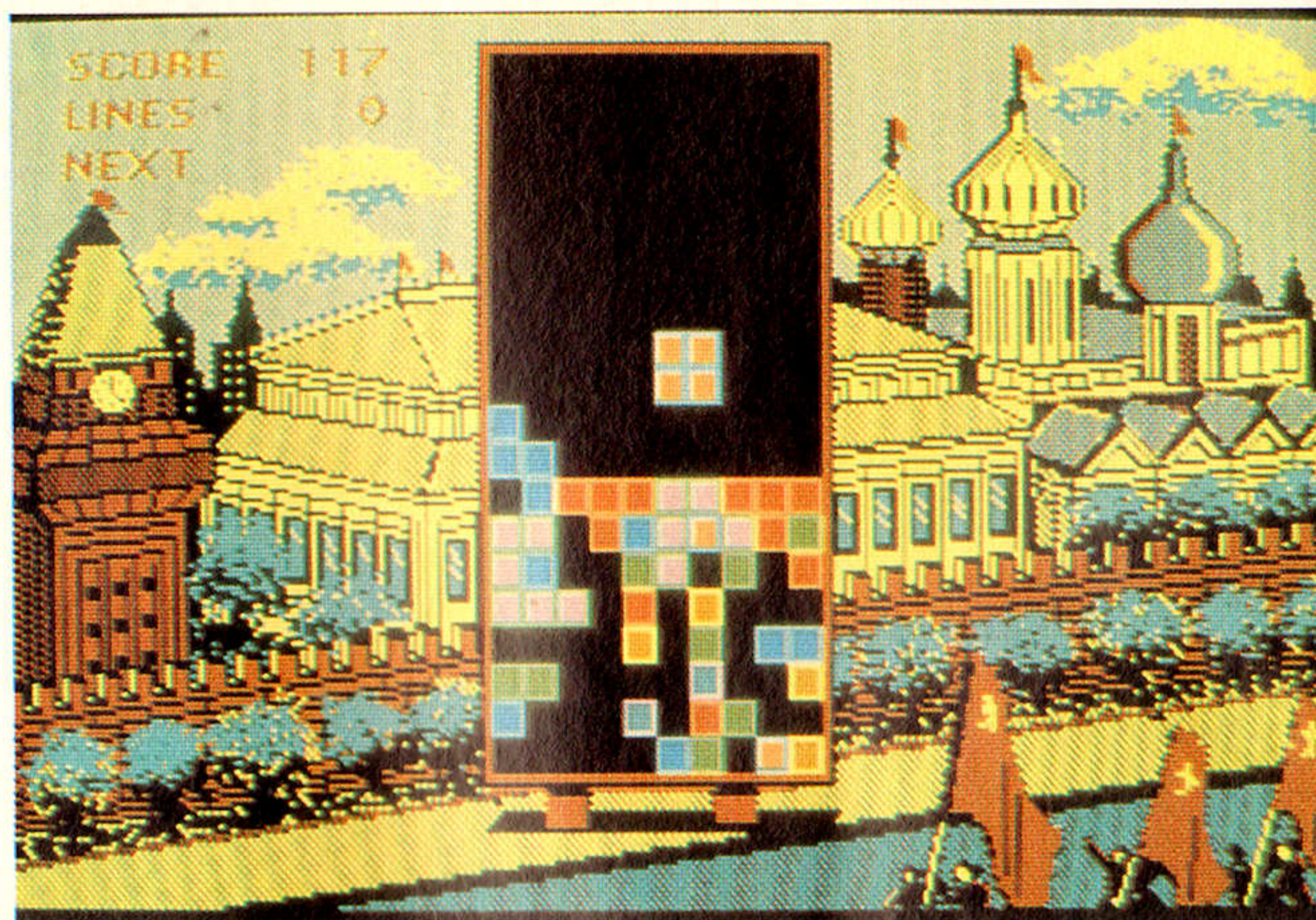
Each little falling piece is one of various shapes, each of which occupies four square units of area. For instance, some pieces are 2x2 squares, others are 4x1 rectangles, and others are L-shaped. You preset the speed at which the objects come down, one at a time, with the ability to rotate or translate their motion even as they are falling. In this way, you can move each falling piece, manipulating it to land at places closer to the bottom of the screen that are momentarily unoccupied.

The more total area occupied, the higher the score. Even by itself, the static problem of filling up a rectangle with pieces is a challenge involving a mathematical sense, or at least a good feel for spatial relations. Maybe it's plain old intuitive insight. Whatever it's called, however, the added dimension of motion makes this a dynamic recreation that is even more challenging.

Surprisingly, however, the game takes literally just a few minutes to learn, if that. Nevertheless, the challenge posed is one that may never be mastered fully, given the timed nature of the game and the way pieces fall in different manners at different times.

To extend the enjoyment, the background, primarily on each side of the rectangle, has different scenes, such as an ice-skating arena, a shot from outer space, and a view of what appears to be Moscow. Publicity releases from SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE confirm that the company added the graphics scenes and that all depict some aspect of, or well-known place of life in, the Soviet Union. To be truthful, these have nothing to do with the game, but serve as nice window dressing. In the version I reviewed for IBM PCs, my AT clone with EGA color showed only these backgrounds as being enhanced. That is, the CGA version did not seem to vary much from the EGA version except for these backgrounds. Thus, the program does not really seem to make effective use of the higher resolution color and graphics of EGA, except in this decorative manner.

A color monitor, as is the case with a joystick, is optional, however. The PC version comes with both 5.25" and 3.5" disks. The program is not copy-protected, so installation to a hard disk is possible and straightforward. Different versions



of the program are included depending on your choice of monitor. For instance, you load ETETRIS for the EGA version. There is also a special RAM-resident version, RTETRIS. This version may be popped up at any time while doing work, such as word processing. The memory-resident version, however, is only for CGA and possibly for monochrome; it doesn't support EGA except perhaps emulating CGA.

The program also contains the now-popular "BOSS" feature: If you are playing the game in ordinary mode and your employer comes by, hit ESCape and a fake spreadsheet appears on the screen (with the game stopped in the background).

TETRIS sports 10 difficulty levels, five heights to choose from (from which the little pieces fall), and a choice of speed of fall. The pieces are evidently generated randomly, but you can re-play the last game as an option. The scoring system keeps track of the top 10 scores on disk. A help screen is available, though of limited utility. There's even a "statistics screen" to show how many times each shape has been generated thus far.

The quicker you adjust the pieces to fall in, and the fewer blank spaces left in the rows you create, the better your score.

As complete rows are formed, they automatically disappear from the screen. When 10 rows have been removed, you advance to a higher level, which means that pieces drop faster and the challenge intensifies.

One difficulty I had was with the joystick. Even when I adjusted the trimmers, I could not get the left motion to work. Only with great difficulty did I get the same joystick to work on an XT clone when I tested **TETRIS** with fellow COMPUTER PLAY reviewer Fred Blechman.

The game also supports keyboard use, though I seldom recommend this. There is a tiny manual — "booklet" is a more accurate term — of 8 pages, with the packaging the kind typical of games today.

Though **TETRIS** is unique and the promotional blurbs speak of the program as addictive, I did not find myself feeling too compelled to play. However, this doesn't mean that you won't feel compelled to play. This kind of game is the kind that can hook many people.

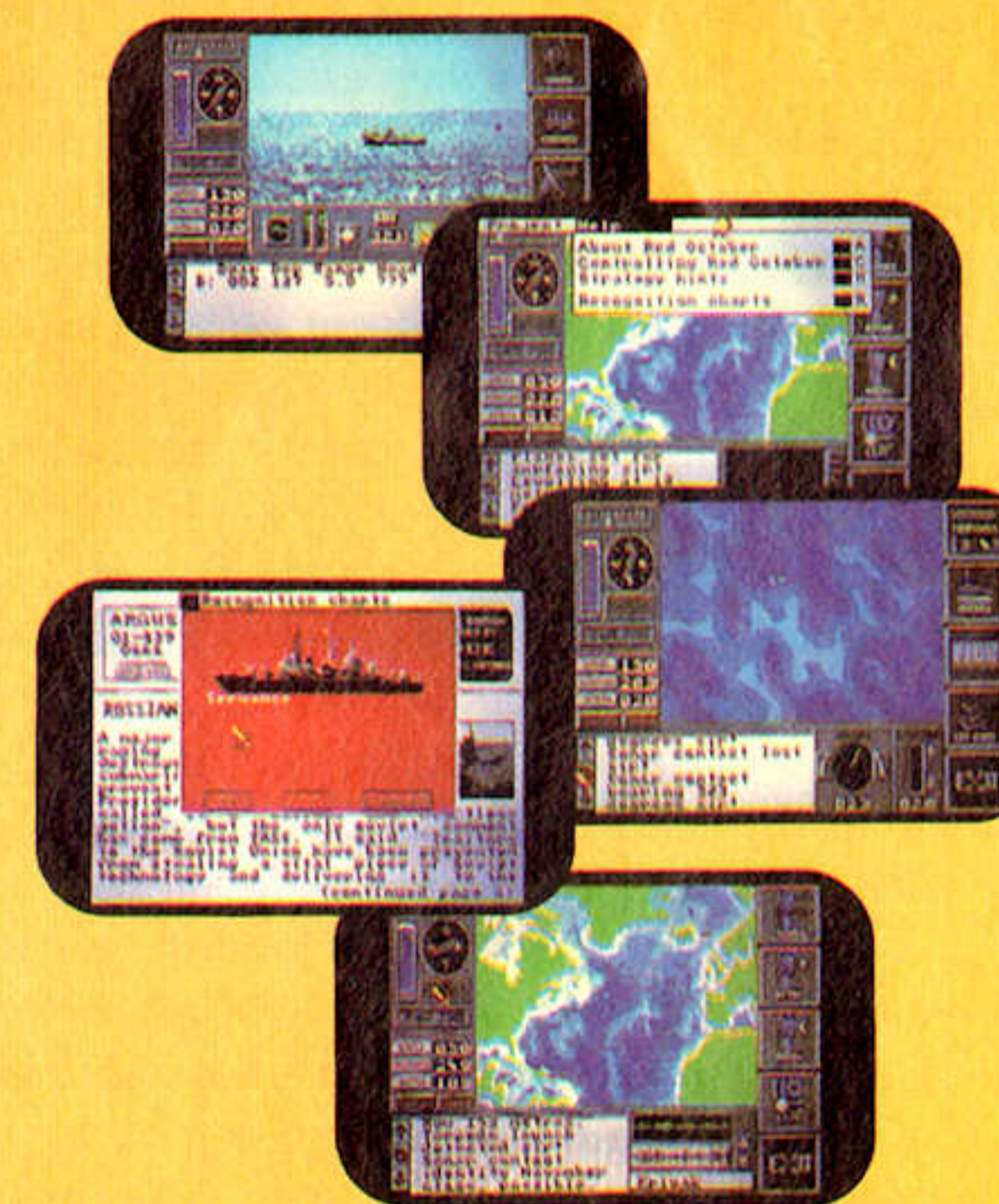
I offer a good recommendation on enjoyment, with an excellent recommendation for uniqueness. The first Russian computer game to come to the West, **TETRIS** is truly the Rubik's cube of software.

Name: TETRIS
Type: Arcade / Strategy
Formats: IBM, Commodore 64;
 IBM version reviewed.
Publisher: Spectrum HoloByte
Designer: Alexi Pasztnov (USSR)
Programmer: Vagim Gerasimov (USSR)
Ages: 10 and up
Requirements: 256K, joystick recommended
Players: 1
Price: \$34.95 (IBM), \$24.95 (C64)

Difficulty: Beginner
Packaging: Very Good (8.5)
Documentation: Very Good (8.5)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (8.5)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATING: 8.5
Circle Reader Service Number 21.

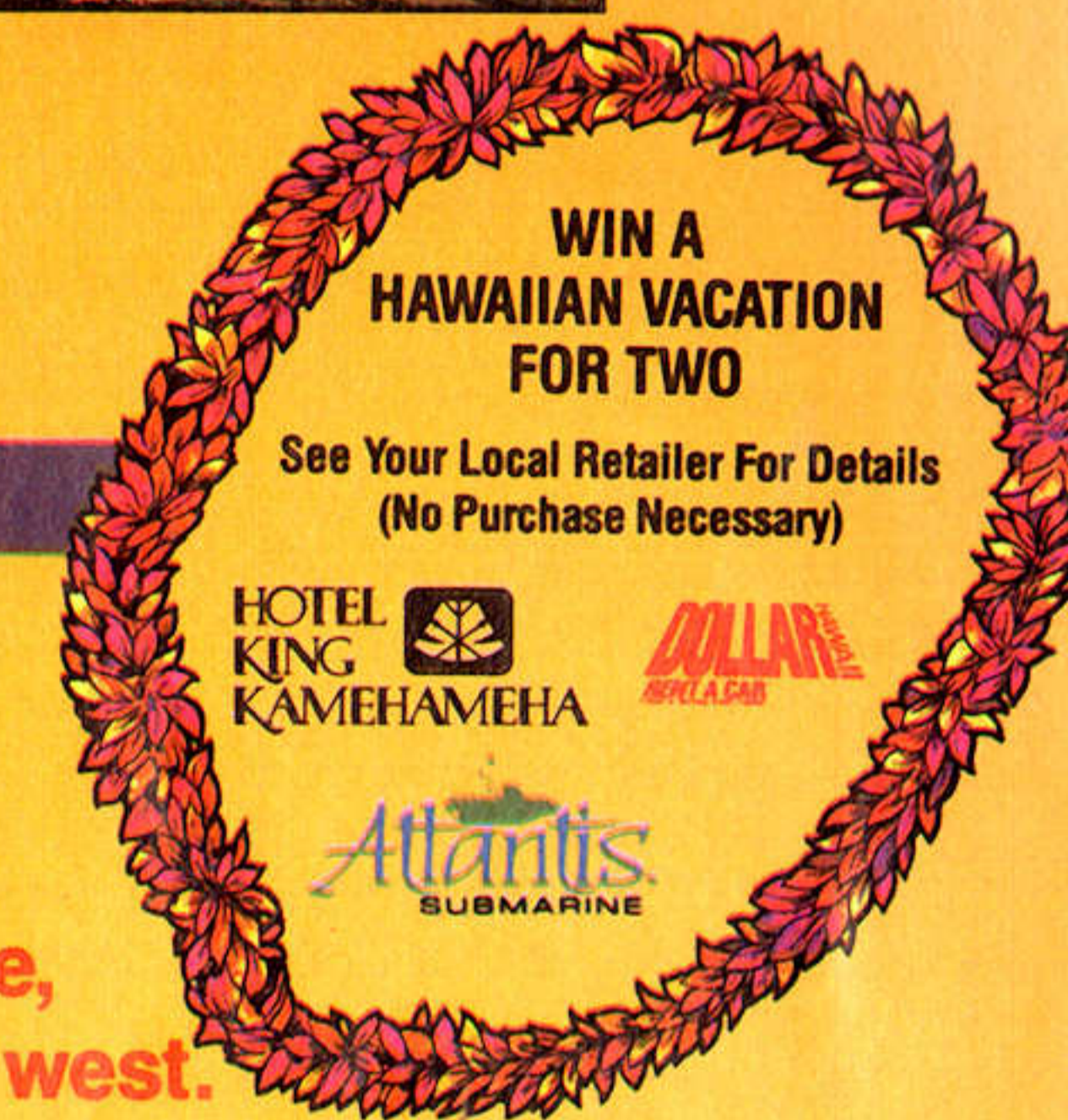
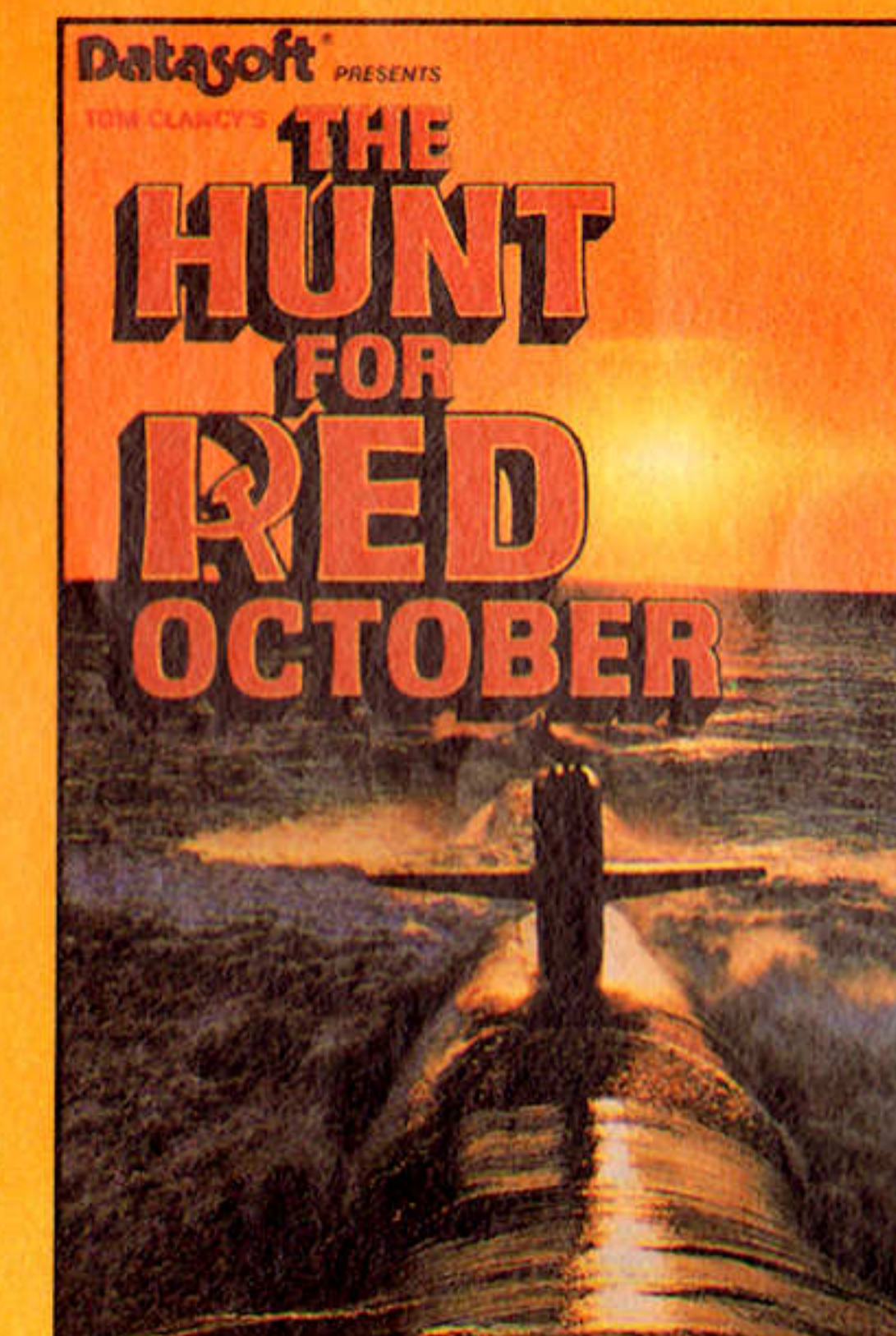
TOM CLANCY'S THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER



Datasoft

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An Introduction to Adventure

By Russ Ceccola

Adventure. What images does that word bring to your mind? Perhaps you might think of a damsel in distress being saved from a huge green dragon by a knight in shining armor. Or maybe you instantly remember that time when you were young when you explored the neighborhood's haunted house only to be chased out by some old geezer with a shotgun. Regardless of the experience, we all have an idea of what "adventure" means.

Merriam-Webster defines 'adventure' as 'a risky undertaking, a remarkable and exciting experience or a business adventure.' The last part of the definition may be the most realistic, but the other parts show more promise of fun. Having fun is the key element in any adventure we pursue in life. In the same way, you must have fun playing a computer adventure game.

Why spend all that money and be bored. You might as well use the disk as an art deco liner for a bird cage. After reading this basic introduction to adventure games, you should pick up a few tips to remove the tedium and difficulty from certain elements of playing adventure games and increase your enjoyment level. In any case, there are hints here for veterans and newcomers alike to practice while playing.

Before even starting an adventure, it would help to know the history of the adventure game. The genre of computer adventures was started by William Crowthers and Don Woods when they placed **Adventure** on M.I.T.'s in the 70's. From this game's inception, others like **Zork** appeared on mainframe computers and, with

the advent of home computers, it was a natural progression for the games to make it to the home market. Since **Adventure** was written (originally in FORTRAN, I might add), thousands of adventure games in settings as varied as outer space, dungeons and future worlds have been written for home computers. At this instant, you can probably go to any computer store and find at least 50 different adventures for your computer.

If this is your first crack at adventure games, it might help to understand what types of adventures are available. After taking every type of adventure game I own and classifying them into categories, I realized that there are six major types of adventure games. They are: text adventures, text-and-graphics adventures, role-playing games, graphic adventures, response/command-oriented games and high technology adventure games.

Text adventures are those games that use no graphics and only words to tell the story and track your progress. Most INFOCOM games, like the **Enchanter Trilogy** or **Zork Trilogy**, are text adventures, where the emphasis is on descriptive prose and concise language to bring a world to life, instead of vivid pictures. Text-and-graphics adventures are basically text games with pictures of the various locations, objects and people that you would see in the universe on the disk.

There are two types of text-and-graphics adventures, however. The first type just adds a pretty picture at various points in the game to what is essentially a text game. Examples of this kind of text-and-graphics adventure would be any of the RAINBIRD games, like **Jinxter** or **The**

Guild of Thieves. The other type adds pictures with some parts that can move or disappear to indicate the animation or presence (or absence) of an object or person. Examples would include any of the POLARWARE games, like **Transylvania**, or SIRUS games like **Blade of Blackpoole** (the first adventure game I ever played).

Role-playing games are directly inspired by Dungeons and Dragons- type board games of the 70's. They usually involve selecting a group of characters with various attributes and skills to journey on a quest for some object or character or to reach some ultimate mind-boggling goal. The most popular examples of this type of adventure are the **Bard's Tale** series and the **Ultima** series. Graphic adventures depend heavily on what you see on the screen for success. The images are important here, with most graphic adventures playing like arcade games - easy to learn to play and a lot of fun. Typical graphic adventures are like **The Last Ninja**, **Dragon's Lair** or **Spell of Destruction**.

Response/command-oriented games depend heavily on dialogue, menus, seemingly indirect control of your game persona and the selection of commands from lists or menus of options. Mysteries fall in this category. This is the smallest area in adventure games and includes games like **Maniac Mansion**, **Perry Mason**, **Portal**, **Law of the West**, **Hacker II**, **Accolade's Comics, Suspended** and **Titanic: The Recovery Mission**. Finally, high technology adventure games are the latest category to emerge. These games take elements from all the other areas to create 'super' adventures that are 'super' in scope, graphics, sound and presentation, with a common quality of using the utmost capabilities of the specific computer for which the game is written. Examples include the CINEMAWARE series, the SIERRA ON-LINE series, **Pirates!**, **Beyond Zork** and **The Faery Tale Adventure**.

Now that you know what kind of adventure you would like to play (or what it is that is already causing you to be late for work), it might help to gather some household items that might make the game-playing process less tiresome and more fun, removing all hindrances. Get together the following things and you'll be set. You want: a clipboard or something to draw or write on that is portable, different colored pens to distinguish areas on maps and different types of objects, lots of pencils like the kind you used in grammar school, lots of scrap paper for drawing maps and taking notes and graph paper with big blocks for mapping dungeons.

You might need: hint books for when you really get stuck, adventure books that cover hints for a wide variety of games (thus saving you money to spend on even more games - keeping software publishers happy), pre-printed map-making kits to further the inevitable process, lots of time to spend on the game (depending on the one you pick up) and music to keep you from going insane, assuming that sound is not crucial

in the game (I personally crank heavy metal through my headphones).

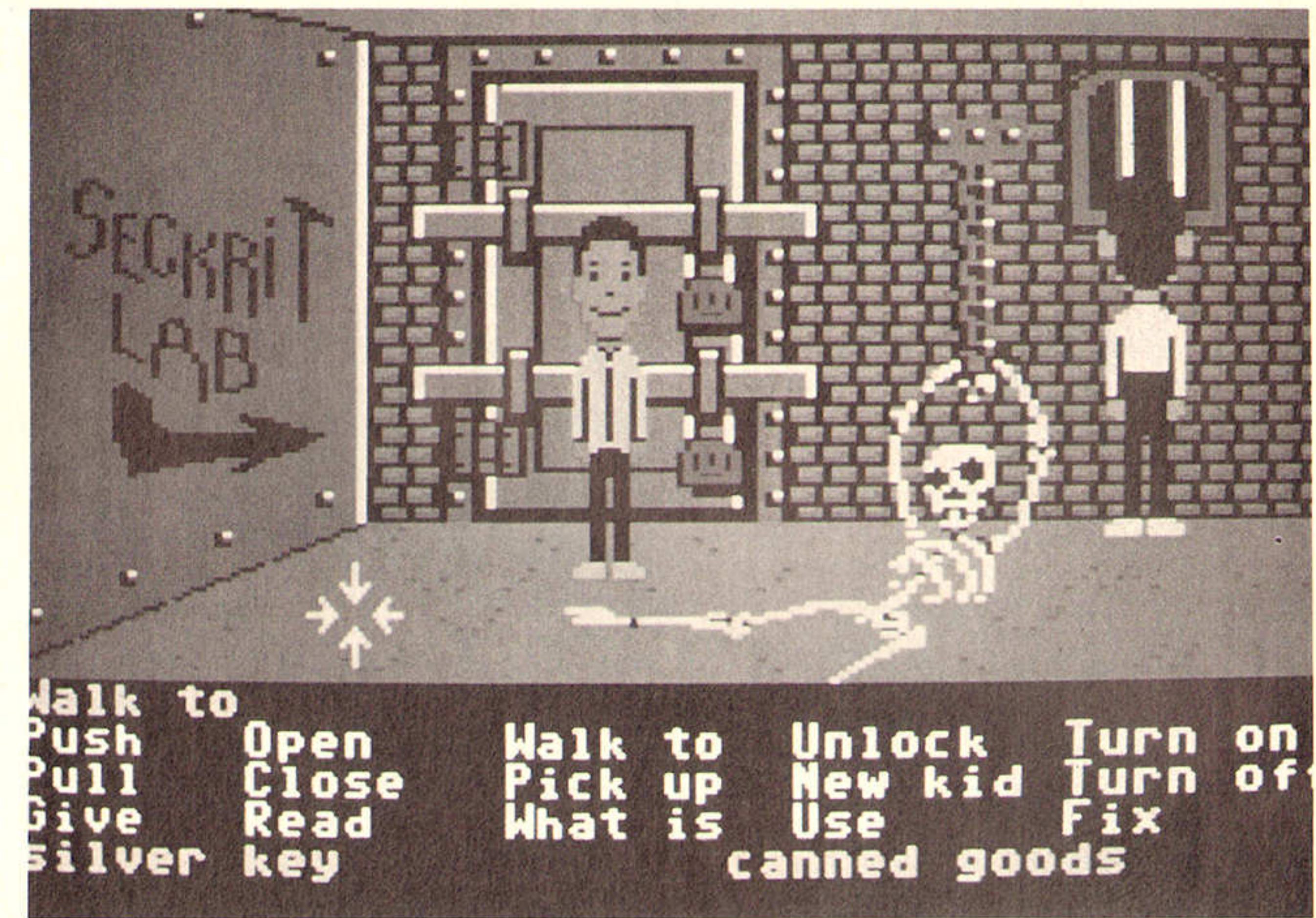
More than ever, you're set to begin a new adventure. Some general hints and tips follow, as well as some suited for only certain types of adventure games. If you are a first-time adventurer, it might help to pick a game that has a running time of two to three hours. A lot of adventure publishers (notably SSI) print an estimated number of hours of playing time on the side of the package. If there is no such information, ask the store clerk to suggest a simple adventure to get you into the swing of things. Once you've got game in hand, you're ready to begin.

Most adventure games allow you to save game positions to be resumed at a future point in time. To make sure that you aren't stuck with having to start all over again (which is an important and humiliating lesson that most people who use word processors and don't save their text learn), format two or three blank disks and label them 'SAVE DISK FOR (adventure name)'. This prevents having to re-navigate a maze or kill a monster again that took ten minutes of combat. With disks in hand, you'll never worry about losing a hard day's work at the computer.

Before starting any game, read the instructions through completely. Understanding what you are supposed to do, as well as how to do it, is better than booting the disk and starting to hit keys at random. A lot of adventures have specialized functions assigned to different individual keys (especially role-playing games) and unique commands. I have never seen any two companies make games that use all the same commands (making reviewing more than one adventure at once difficult). Prepare yourself by reading the manual and even self-quizzing yourself on how to do things in the game.

Knowing how to map your progress is very important in adventures. There are three types of maps you might have to draw. The first uses boxes and lines to show the limits of your exploration in a game - used mainly for text games and text-and-graphics adventures. Simply draw boxes to show the locations in the game and connect them with lines in the cardinal directions to indicate how to get from one box (location) to another. I'm sure you've seen these maps somewhere. If not, you might want to obtain mapmaking kits from Questbusters journal or either volume of The Book of Adventure Games by Kim Schuette. Both give further tips on how to draw maps and show examples of at least two of the three types of maps I'll discuss.

The second kind of map is used for dungeons or any geography comprised of a matrix of rooms (or squares). Use graph paper for these games, darkening lines where walls go and indicating other peculiarities with symbols that you should make up yourself (like traps, one-way doors, treasure, etc.). Finally, the last map allows you to use your artistic powers (assuming you have any - which I don't). You might need to draw actual geography, showing positions of towns, dungeons and other unique places, on a map of a continent or land of an adventure



Maniac Mansion from Lucasfilm Games.

game. You'll need this skill for role-playing games. Shapes need not be specific, but you should record the relative distances between locations, as well as the approximate borders of the land.

With mapmaking skills honed and the instructions understood, all that's left to do is to play. Some tips on approach to games might help at this point. Don't let the goal of the game overwhelm you. You should explore every possible location that you initially can, recognizing friends and foes, as well as all types of objects and locations, as you go along. Don't try to solve the game at first - just go in random directions and see everything that is before you for a couple of practice games. Only after you know the extent of your beginning quest can you start solving the puzzles that confront you.

Puzzles are an important part of any adventure. Remember - you are trying to reach some goal and it certainly won't come easy to you after only exploring a few rooms and killing a few monsters. Think things through and examine all objects carefully. If an object is magical, try it out on random characters and objects to see its effect and save it for a time that seems to warrant just that type of magic. Talk to characters within the story to find out further information about your goal and the land of the game. In any case, don't look at puzzles as a hindrance to seeing the end of the game, but realize that a certain degree of skill is needed to get further - usually the skills you would need if you really were that character whose role you are assuming. Believe me, after solving a particularly challenging puzzle you'll feel a great degree of accomplishment. Go for the simpler games first to avoid hangups.

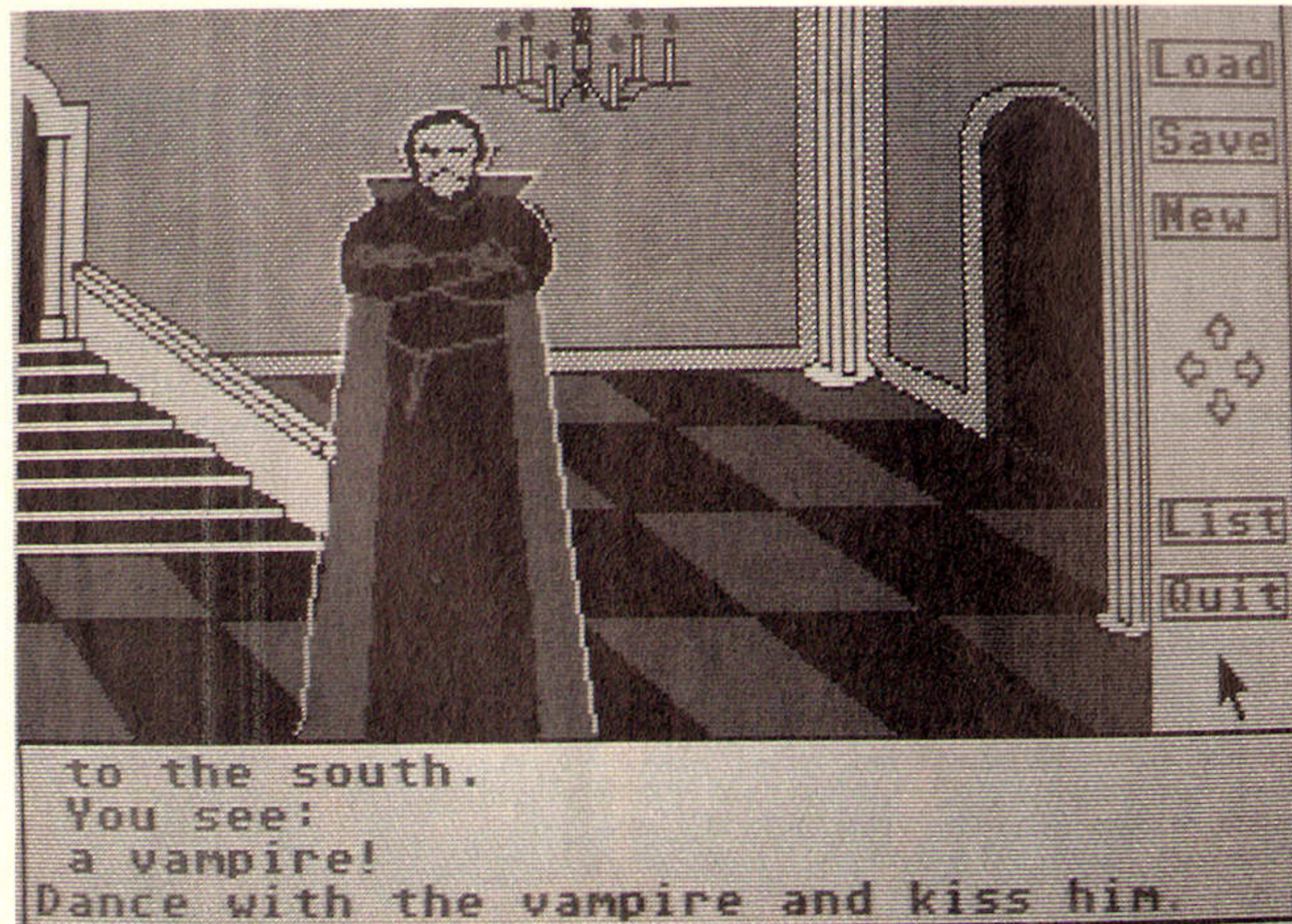
In text games, make sure you read every bit of text carefully, since the lack of pictures leaves you with only words to present the game. Often, clues

are given in descriptions of objects and people. Read carefully. In text-and-graphics games, look for parts of the picture that appear different from the rest of the graphics. They might be objects that can be moved in the game universe that were just drawn on top of the background picture. Also look for clues in the graphics.

In role-playing games, make sure that the characters you create are well-endowed and well-equipped. A character with low abilities or a low number of possessions is sure to die in any role-playing world. Most role-playing games have sample characters on the disk. Use them! Treat graphic adventures as arcade games that require object and character recognition for further success and you'll be just fine. Most graphic adventures require use of a lot of objects, so learn what they look like as soon as possible.

With response/command-oriented games, your skills in communication are put to the test. Choose responses and talk to characters in a manner that evokes the most information and doesn't offend them. In the case of command-oriented games and those that involve indirect control of a character or object, learn the extent of the controls you have and the commands at your disposal. The right menu selection is very important here. Finally, in the case of high technology adventure games, use all the skills from the appropriate other categories of adventure games and remember that there is usually a lot to do. Take each step carefully and savor any information that your computer graphically or audibly presents to you.

That about does it for this little tutorial. I hope that I've sparked some interest to go play a game after reading this article. I've decided myself that I'm going to go start a new game after I'm done. In any case, pick up a game, gain some experience and, most importantly, have fun. Happy questing and tell the monsters I said "Hi!"



Transylvania from Polarware.

NEW HOPE FOR BATTERED STORY GAMERS.

"THERE'S A LOT I LIKE about computer adventures, but it sure isn't fun getting killed all the time. That's why *Maniac Mansion* is so refreshing — I can play from start to finish without dying once!"

That's more than great fan mail. It's a very astute observation. Because while most story games treat



In *Maniac Mansion*, a movie-style "cut-scene" quickly establishes the characters' personalities.



Just three "clicks," and you'll send Zak McKracken over to the pawn shop counter to buy a pair of nose glasses.

you like the meat in the dog food factory, Lucasfilm story games treat you like a human being who just wants some good clean fun.

The fun starts with an engaging plot, hot graphics and tasty puzzles. But what keeps it going is a unique design that lets you play the game instead of fighting the computer.

THE NO-TYPING INTERFACE.

Today's story games evolved from text adventures. The

Not with Lucasfilm's new "point 'n' click" interface, though. All the words you need are right on the screen. Just click the cursor on them to choose characters, objects, and actions.

Now you can play an entire fifty hour game without typing a single word. Or putting your life on hold until you realize the green leafy thing is a... plastic fern.

MORE STORY. LESS GORY.

Most story game designers seem to think people love to get clobbered.

We don't. After all, how much fun can it be to have a fatal accident every three and a half minutes... then reload your saved game, take a few timid steps forward, and save it again. Seems more like paranoia than entertainment.

That's why Lucasfilm story games make it downright difficult to die. Oh,

you'll get into major hot water all right, but you'll have the fun of getting out of it, too.

LET'S GET CRAZY TOGETHER.

Just pick up a copy of *Maniac Mansion*, the comedy thriller about a kidnapped cheerleader, a very mad



scientist, and a hilariously creepy rescue mission.

Or *Zak McKracken And The Alien Mindbenders*, where you and a seedy tabloid journalist save the world from space aliens who want us all to have the IQs of turnips.

You'll love the twisty plots and the goofy characters. You'll crack up constantly with the zany one-liners and sight gags. And you'll go just a little crazy with the mind-bending puzzles.

Crazy, but nicely crazy.

LUCASFILM GAMES

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The action-packed statistically enhanced computer game with all 26 major league teams, and all the stars like Dave Winfield, Ozzie Smith, Jose Canseco, Roger Clemens, George Brett, Alan Trammell and Fernando Valenzuela.

NEW YORK	POS	NAME	NEW YORK	POS	NAME
ALDERSON	OF	253	SPENCER	OF	253
BABOLPH	2B	305	JOHNSON	2B	263
BRITTON	1B	323	KEENE	1B	214
WINTFIELD	RF	273	STANBERRY	CF	284
WATKINSON	OF	270	WELLS	OF	273
PARKMAN	3B	230	CARTER	C	235
KEANE	SS	273	BACKMAN	2B	258
SALAS	C	258	SKATON	SS	253
JOHN	P	581	RODOLPH	P	215

Updated roster/stat disks available every season.

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"If it were any more realistic, you'd need a batting helmet." Gary Carter



As the pitcher, you can throw the batter a curve, a high hard one. Pitch him inside, outside. Even brush him back if he's crowding the plate. Just remember, he's got great bat control. He

might even drag a bunt on you.

Throw it home or hit the cutoff man. Go for the great catch or play it safe. Steal a base? How about a pitching change? Just remember. Anything the pros can do, you can do. If you're good.

Available for Commodore 64/128, Apple II & compatibles, IBM & compatibles

EPYX

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Frozen Fun and Serious Competition

By Rusel DeMaria

MINDSCAPE'S *Superstar Ice Hockey* is one of the most comprehensive sports simulations available on a personal computer. This program covers all aspects of an ice hockey league and allows you to play manager, coach, and player.

Your goal is to lead your team to the league championship, but you face a stiff challenge ahead. Your lowly team starts out with a lot to learn, and you must go up against the experienced teams in your own conference to earn a shot at the conference championships, the subsequent division championships, and, finally, the SportTime Cup. It may take several seasons before you make it to that exalted position. You'll have to trade players, recruit rookies, retire veterans, and make the right decisions all along the way. And, if that weren't enough, you'll have to wield the stick yourself and take your best slap shot!

While some games excel at one aspect of a sports simulation or another, *Superstar Ice Hockey* seems to excel at all aspects of the game. Even if you aren't interested in all the league interactions and player analysis, you can play practice games in which you control either the center or the goalie on your team. You can play with two, four, or six players to a side to practice passing the puck and shooting (not to mention tripping and slashing).

Team Statistics

Each player on each team has three important statistics that you, as the manager, must weigh -- age (0 to 9 years), offense rating, and defense rating. The total rating for any player is the sum of offense and defense. A rookie can have no more than 24 total points, but an experienced star may have more than 50 total rating points. Age is an important statistic, however, because older players tire more easily and recover more slowly.

Between seasons, you can use an allotment of trading points to improve your team via trades, training camps, or rookie recruitment. The teams lowest in the standings are allotted the most points, so you'll probably have lots of points to work with after your first few seasons.

You can accomplish overall improvement in your team by allotting points to training camp. The more points you use, the more training and improvement the whole team will display.

Trading players with other teams is realistically difficult. Teams won't give you their star players in exchange for your rejects. They aren't that stupid. You'll have to find players of moderate skill, or of growing potential, then try to offer the other team a player they want. In addition, you'll probably have to offer them some of your trading points. And the league imposes an additional 150 trading points, even if the trade offer is rejected. That means that attempting a trade can be costly, and can yield you nothing.



Recruiting a rookie from the minor leagues is somewhat less expensive, though you must replace a current player if your roster is full, and a rookie's total skill rating cannot exceed 24. He will, however, improve with time, and it might be wise to begin replacing older players with younger ones if you have an eye toward a future league title.

Young players tend to improve from season to season, but all too soon they grow old. Yesterday's star is today's Hall of Fame candidate. You have to know when to restructure your offensive and defensive lines, when to retire a player past his prime, and when to look for new blood.

The Winning Season

When the season begins, it all comes down to coaching and playing, and you must do both. As the coach, you must decide which of three offensive and defensive teams to send onto the ice at any point in a game, and which of three offensive and defensive strategies to call at each break in the action. The comprehensive manuals that accompany the game give you plenty of information about ice hockey in general, and specific strategy.

Once you have finished your coaching duties for the moment, it's time to don a different hat (or mask, as the case may be) and take to the ice as a player. Now you may play the center, and become the scoring machine that sparks your team to victory, or become the goalie and hold the opposition to the big zero. The choice is yours from game to game. I must confess to a preference for the center. He gets to skate the length of the rink, slamming into the opposition and (when he can get away with it) tripping or slashing his way through the game.

Yes, ice hockey is a rough sport, but just so you won't get too self-confident, penalties can interrupt your fun. Though a certain amount of roughness is tolerated, blatant fouls will send you to the penalty box for two minutes -- an eternity in a close game. Without you, your team must hope to hold the fort, and (in your

role as coach) you must make the right strategic decisions to outlast the penalty.

On the more sportsmanlike side of the game, you can use the joystick to pass the puck, or to shoot. You can fake shots, or decide to shoot close to the ice or loft the puck. There's nothing quite so satisfying as skating at top speed toward the opponent's goal, faking the goalie and then sending a quick wrist shot past his outstretched glove. This game can quickly move from the violent to the graceful, from pure mischief to outstanding athletics.

This game has everything -- excellent graphics, excellent strategy, excellent play, and excellent documentation. Everything is under joystick control, and even the most detailed managerial and coaching decisions are easily accomplished. This is a complete sports simulation, and one even people who know next to nothing about ice hockey should enjoy. In fact, the only thing missing from *Superstar Ice Hockey* is that cold smell of the ice and the inevitable brawls.

Name: Superstar Ice Hockey
Type: Sports Simulation
Formats: Apple II, IIgs, Atari ST, C64, IBM
Publisher: Mindscape, Inc.
Designer: Ed Ringler
Ages: 9 and up
Players: One or two
Requirements: one or two joysticks recommended
Price: \$34.95 - \$49.95

Ability level: Intermediate to Advanced
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Excellent (9.5)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.0)
Playability: Excellent (9.8)

CP Rating: 9.28

Circle Reader Service Number 12.

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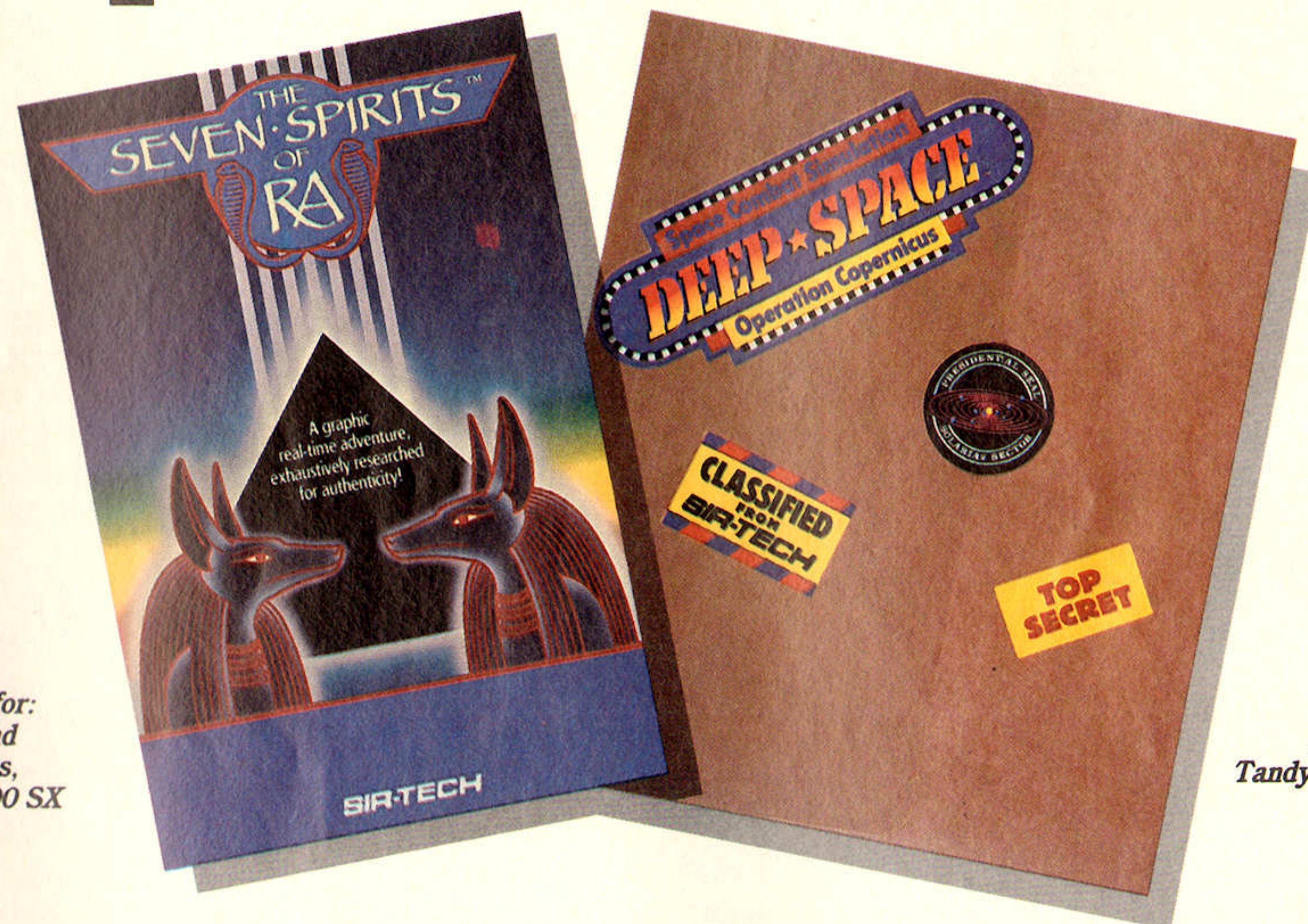
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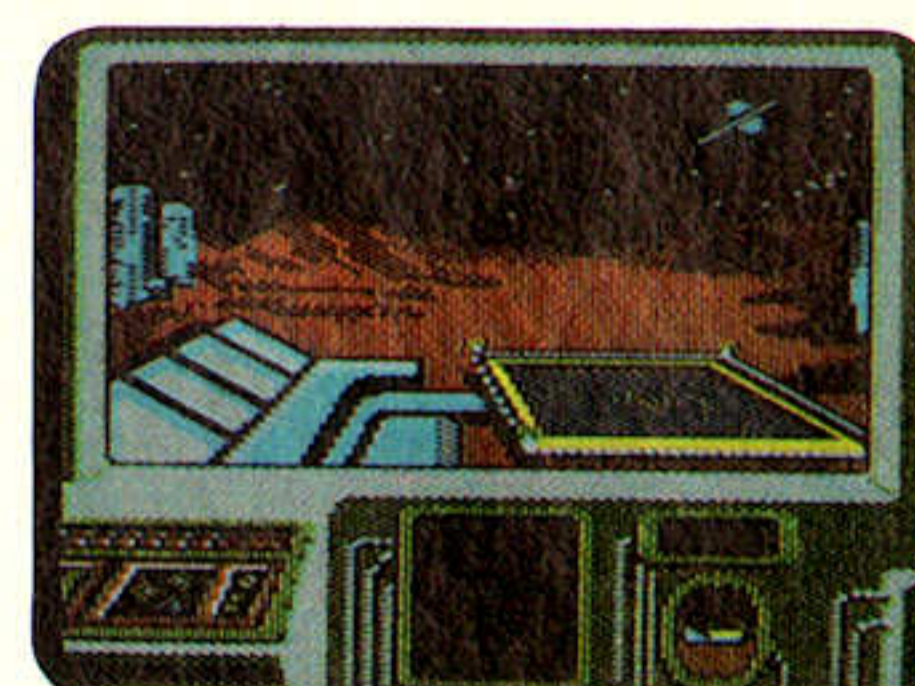
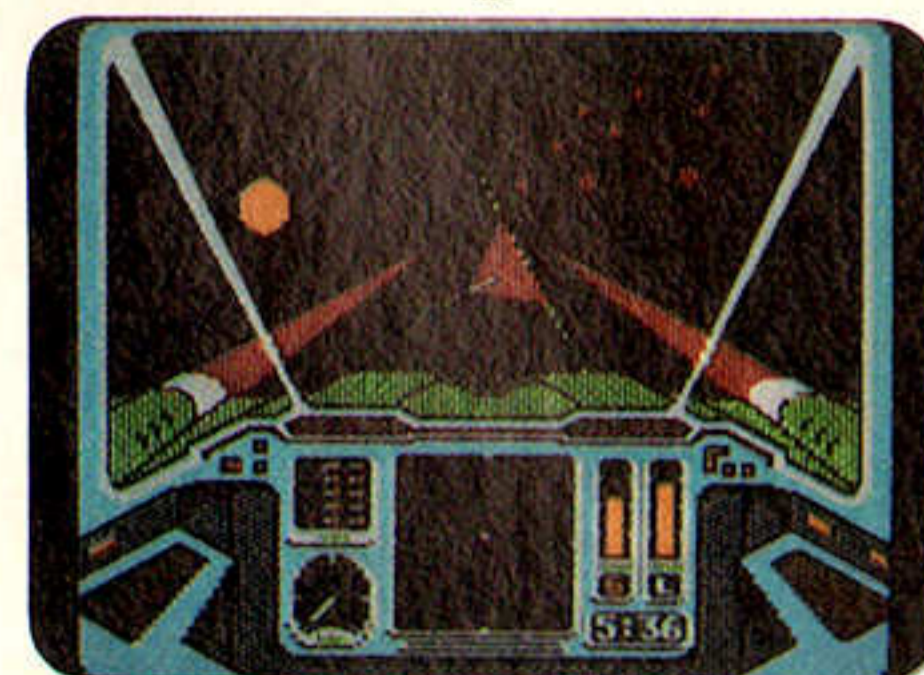


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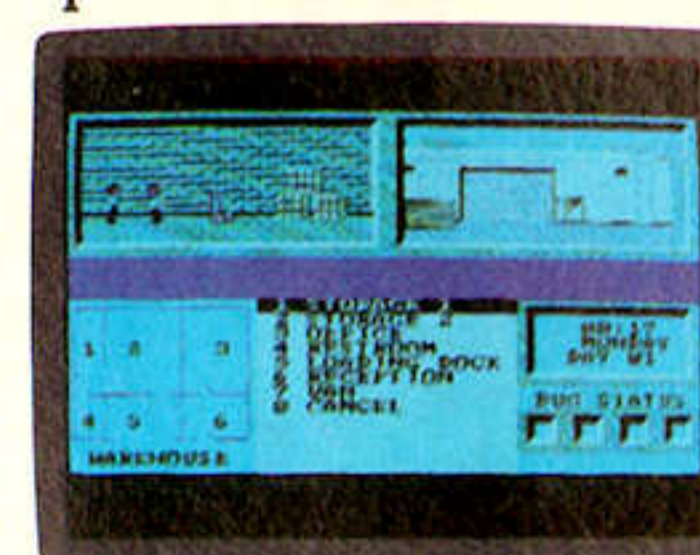
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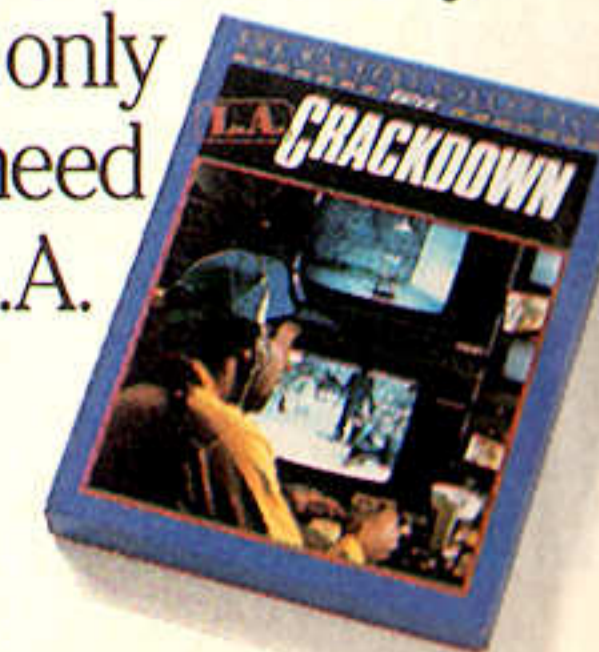
You'll also need to draw on every strategy brain cell available.

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BY EPYX®

Commodore 64/128, IBM & compatibles, Apple II & compatibles



Circle Reader Service Number 43.

Play Online All Over the Country

By Cheryl Peterson

How is it possible for people all over the country to play computerized games together without any of them leaving home? How can these players team up to face computer-generated opponents in concert with each other? How can homebody gamblers play poker, blackjack, slot machines or bingo without having a mess to clean up afterwards? Through the magic of online services and modems, players gather to participate in dragon hunts, aviation dogfights, interstellar empire building, dungeon explorations, card games and other multiplayer activities.

Picture this scenario — a man and woman in Maryland, a man in Louisiana, a woman in California and a man in Georgia plan an attack on an evil snake God that lives in a mine and devours unwary adventurers. As with other role-playing gamers before them, they've developed powerful alter egos to fight the game's battle. Numerous hours playing the game have honed their skills. The man who created this ultimate challenge designed it never to be beaten.

The players turn on their computers and dial local phone numbers. After entering their id numbers and passwords so that the system will know who they are, they enter the game using a short command string. These players need to coordinate their effort before they actually start playing, so they use another command to access the conference area. Once there, everything they type on their keyboard will be seen by everyone else in the group. This ability allows them to plan strategy without being interrupted by the "action" of the game.

After a short discussion, they enter the game. Since they've planned this attack for weeks, their characters are all standing outside the snake's lair. On each computer screen is a representation of their current location and a listing of all the people and opponents in their immediate vicinity. They know the snake is hidden just around a corner that they are using for concealment until they are ready to spring their plan.

The game allows players to append comments to the commands they use to play. These comments appear on their companions' screens. After confirming that everyone is ready, the battle is joined. In this case, one person (the bait) steps into the snake's line of sight. The player is instantly attacked and takes heavy damage. The other players jump to his aid. The open bottle of balm in the character's hand is his only hope of survival. When he drinks it, he is instantly cured. He drops the bottle and quickly pulls another from his sack and opens it.

By this time the snake has noticed the others in the party and he switches targets. The other players are all attacking the snake with their weapons. The armor and magical items they've collected through months of play help them in their struggle. After about 10 minutes the fight is over. The snake is defeated, but not before he has eaten one member of the party. The players

search through the treasure hoard of the their fallen opponent and divvy up the rewards. They'll have to help their fallen comrade build a new character to replace the one that was eaten.

After the treasure is divided, they go back to the conference area to figure out what they could have done differently to save their comrade.

Though it sounds far-fetched and to some may seem like science fiction, this is not an imaginary tale. Such a game exists and the players have indeed fought such a battle. The Island of Kesmai is one of the most technologically advanced games currently available. It can handle up to a hundred players and has challenges for both beginning and advanced role-playing gamers.

To enter the world of online gaming, you must establish an account with an "information service," GEnie or Quantumlink. While advertised as information vendors, they also support gaming facilities that far surpass anything available for home or personal computers alone.

Starter kits are available directly from the services or through local computer stores. You'll probably need a credit card to start your account. CompuServe offers "CheckFree" payment in which they collect the bills due to them directly from your bank account once a month.

Typical charges run from about \$3 an hour on Quantumlink to \$6.25 an hour on CompuServe. GEnie charges about \$5 an hour. Most services have local telephone access in major US cities, so you needn't pay long distance charges to call. In some areas, customers sign-on through Tymnet or Telenet which adds a dollar an hour to the cost.

Gaming choices range from text adventures to five-card stud, from a Star Wars-style spaceship battle simulator to a Flight Simulator-style aviation game, from an online version of the TV game show Family Feud to rows of slot machines.

Each service offers a place outside the games' confines where players can discuss the finer points of the games. On CompuServe, for instance, the MultiPlayer Games (GO MPGAMES) forum sponsors meetings for players who gather to share tips and hints. Each regularly scheduled meeting focuses on one game and experts are available to answer newcomers' questions.

The forum's electronic bulletin board stores messages and questions about the games. Special forum helpers provide answers either by posting a reply on the board where everyone can read it or by sending the reply to the online equivalent of a mailbox. In many cases, questions are answered by the people who actually run and monitor the game.

On Quantumlink, there is a "lounge area" that you enter when you first pop into Rabbit Jack's Casino. A Casino Helper is always on duty to answer questions players may have. Since the games include graphics as well as text, you need more than just the standard signon disk provided when you join Quantumlink. Before you access the Casino, you must buy an inexpensive Casino disk.

Some challenges are intended for teams of players. In fact, a few games are designed with teams in mind. This means your online personality can have a great deal to do with how successful you are. Making friends and having a good time are an integral part of these games, so it's a good idea to be polite, friendly and helpful whenever possible.

When online, keep in mind that language tells a lot about you. No service allows the use of blatantly sexual language. Since these are family-oriented games, the operators frown on profanity. Remember, you never know who's on the other end of the line.

The systems allow players to use a "handle," a name other than your real one that represents who you are. The name you choose should tell others something about you.

"Credit Card Melt-down" has killed fewer multiplayer gamers than the computerized opponents, but it is a much more deadly form of extinction. It is almost a necessity to track how much time you spend online. Running up bills of hundreds of dollars is all too easy. I have known people who have spent thousands of dollars playing games. This form of entertainment is VERY addicting.

Quantumlink offers a helpful feature for parents. By creating sub-accounts and setting budget limits they can control how much money is spent. For families with teenagers this can be a real money saver. Unfortunately, other services don't offer this option.

Having played on all of these games at "weird" hours of the night, I can say that even at four AM there are frequently players on the games. All night sessions are not that unusual and are the rule of thumb for weekends.

Playing multiplayer games is addicting and certainly more expensive than buying a computer game and playing it. The \$30 paid for a disk-based computer game would only get about ten hours of play on the least expensive of these systems. But these games offer challenges that can't be found in "normal" computer games. The opportunity to play with and against human opponents adds a dimension unparalleled by other games. And it's a great way to make new friends.

CompuServe
5000 Arlington Centre Blvd.
Columbus, Ohio 43220
(614) 457-8600
(800) 848-8199

GEnie
401 North Washington St.
Rockville Md 20850
(800) 638-9636

QuantumLink
8620 Westwood Center Drive
Vienna, Virginia 22180
(800) 392-8200

The Desert Fox Returns

By Russ Ceccola

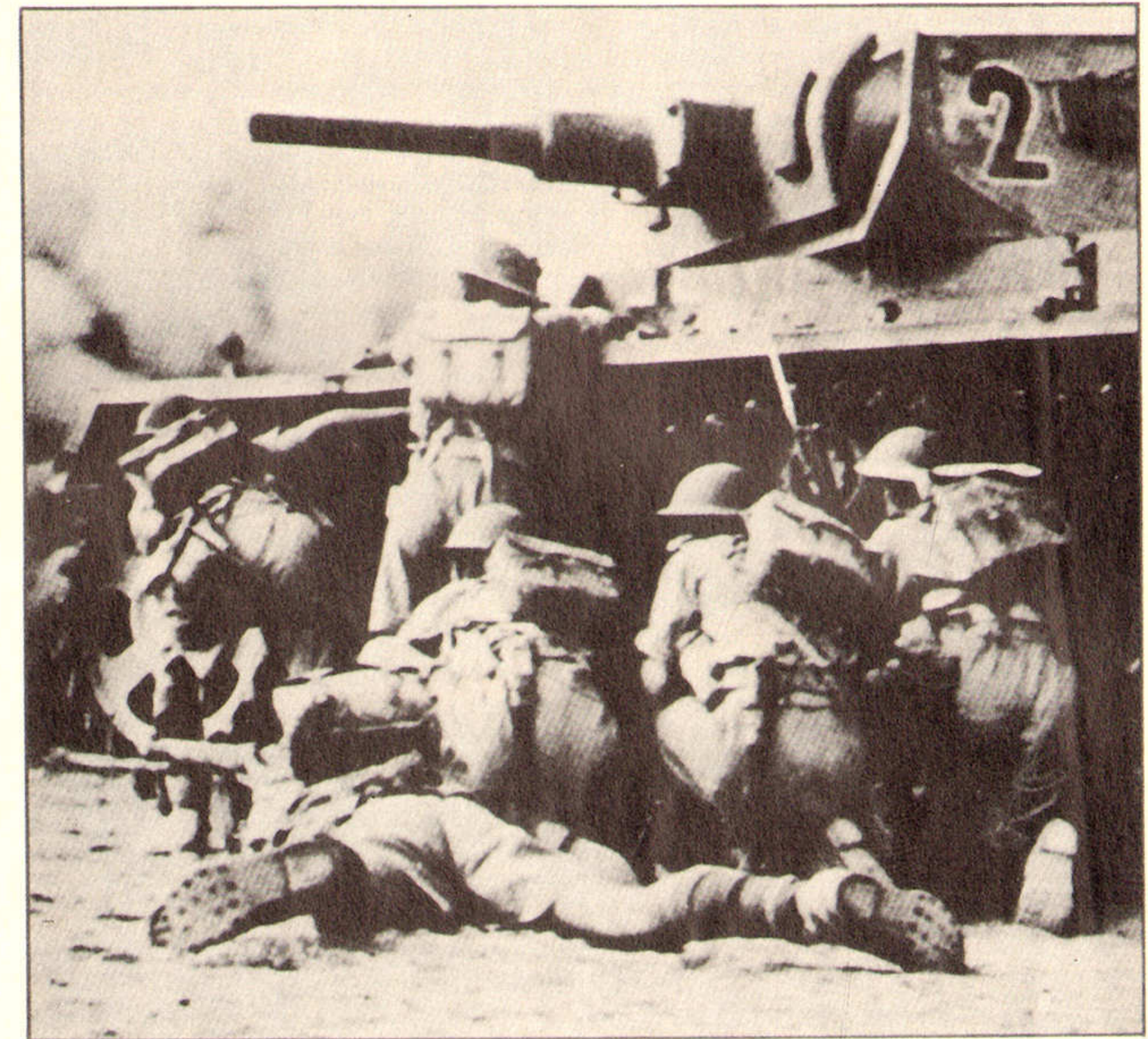
True to the level of sophistication of their previous war games, Strategic Studies Group (SSG) has created yet another winner in **Rommel**. A group of designers from Australia, currently has their work distributed by ELECTRONIC ARTS in America. Their war games established a precedent in the industry since the release of *Battlefront* and the group shows no signs of letting up. What makes SSG war games so unique is the amount of detail put into each game, the great packaging and helpful inclusions and the menu-based system that makes the games so easy to play.

Rommel deals with the battles of General Irwin **Rommel**, the WWII figure who led the Germans to many successes in the North African Theater of war. **Rommel** includes scenarios for eight of the Desert Fox's many battles. These scenarios are: Syria, Sidi Rezegh, Cauldron, Alem al Halfa, Kasserine, Maknassy and Tebourga Gap. Also, a scenario for the hypothetical Invasion of Malta is included on the disk. You can choose to play the part of the Axis powers, Allies or both (two player game). Also, a unique feature called **OBSERVE** mode allows you to watch the computer play both sides and analyze the results and intermediate steps.

Although I'm not an avid history buff, I can assure you that **Rommel** is historically accurate. A friend of mine is a graduate student of history and verified the scenarios by just looking at the game and results. Included in the manual are descriptions of all of the battles, showing historical importance, as well as strategical value. In addition to these scenario descriptions, there are a list of scenario variants given for each one to allow greater enjoyment of the game. **Rommel** certainly offers a lot for the war gamer fan of WWII, as well as the fan of strategy games of all types.

Unique to SSG games is the method of game play. Each day is divided into four turns (am, noon, pm and nite) and a game consists of at most 99 turns or 25 days. A turn involves examining a variety of reports that can be generated about the status of the battle and troops, giving orders to the men and executing the orders. All battles are based on a common unit of battalion. These units are combined into regiments and divisions for heirarchical and strategical purposes. This game system and all of its features are what make SSG war games in general and **Rommel** in particular excellent choices for war gamers.

Rommel is entirely menu-driven and, once you get the hang of the menus, you should have no problem using them. To aid in this endeavor, **Rommel** comes with two cards that show the structure, options and interconnection of all of the menus in the game. The design menus, game menus and startup menus are kept separate and graphically depict all of the ways to travel in-between game options. These cards are the most useful inclusion in the game package, aside from the well-written manual. They eliminate all



need of memorization of commands.

The manual itself is very well-written and describes in detail every game option, as well as scenario information. If that isn't enough, there are also a game map (that includes a portion for each scenario) and specialized SSG save game disk labels. All of these inclusions and the game packaging and literature live up to the standards of excellence established before by SSG.

As a bonus to **Rommel**, the game disk also includes the programs *Warpaint* and *Warplan* for you adventurous and creative people. *Warplan* lets you create your own scenarios and games and *Warpaint* allows full creative control over the graphics of the game. Both programs will support the editing of the existing **Rommel** scenarios, as well as those of *Battles in Normandy* and *Halls of Montezuma* for play in **Rommel**, and suggest creativity in designing your own war games. Pluses like these make or break any software package; in this case, the consumer has the advantage.

Rommel is very easy to play as far as operating the game. The tough part comes, as with any war game, in choosing strategy to win a given scenario. The nice thing about SSG games that separate them from other war games is that your goal is not to simply destroy every enemy unit on the screen. Rather, you are given victory points

for holding certain objective locations for a certain number of turns in the game. This method of play heightens the importance of making strategically sound decisions and lessens the drive that has been instilled in so many people by numerous other war games to surround and wipe out enemy units. I found myself thinking about what I was doing more carefully than I had before with other war games.

The only complaint I have about playing **Rommel** is a side effect of using the menus. The menus that operate **Rommel** are always on the right side of the screen, unless you are entering form-like information on certain screens. In some cases, the game map takes up the rest of the screen; in other cases, text fills that space. The menus are controlled by the cursor keys and F1 key - which is used as an escape key to go to previous menus. Although these keys can be very useful, it sometimes becomes boring in playing SSG games to touch the same keys over and over again. It would have been nice to allow use of a joystick in moving around the menus, in addition to the cursor keys. Perhaps the joystick button could have taken the place of the RETURN key to enter choices and the only time you would need to touch the keyboard would be for using the F1 key. Anyone who has played SSG games before can probably sympathize with me.

Graphics and sound are never important aspects of serious strategical war games. For the most part, the graphics have to only be clean enough to distinguish units and the sound can be nonexistent altogether to give the player the full experience of playing the game. The graphics in **Rommel** are very good. Every unit and terrain icon is unique and the screen maps closely follow what you see on the printed map. As far as sound goes, it is virtually missing from the game. A short theme plays at the beginning of the game after loading and little blips are heard as units are selected for examination or are moved around on the screen. This use of sound is exactly what I was looking for, because if there is

too much music or sound effects you might lose concentration on the strategy of the game.

Using the menus to control the game is picked up after the first few minutes of play, just like the package says. I have always been impressed with the way that SSG sets up their menus. They follow each other logically and are set up in such a way as to force you to enter commands in the correct order. This is especially true in the **Warplan** and **Warpaint** programs. When creating a new scenario or editing the icons, the menus take you through all of the possibilities in a convenient order that prevents selections on a lower level before the more general choices are made.

The inclusion of **Warplan** and **Warpaint** is very important to the value of **Rommel**. You can

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Circle Reader Service Number 25.

virtually create entire new scenarios, as long as they follow the hierarchy of battalions, regiments and divisions. If you wanted, you could make up a space game or any other setting, but it would be limited to the hierarchy established for the Battlefront game system that **Rommel** uses. For their intended purpose, these two extra programs are excellent - easy to use because of the menu control and able to make scenarios for use with any of the games that use the Battlefront game system.

Game lengths vary in **Rommel**. The longest scenario would probably take about three hours to play against a human component. Playing against the computer takes less time and running the game in OBSERVE mode takes the least amount of time. I found OBSERVE mode to be an interesting option that you can use to test scenarios that you have created and a tool that allows you to develop good strategy based on what you see the computer do. In any case, you can spend as much time as you want playing **Rommel**. I would suggest the following sequence of events to really enjoy a particular scenario: read the scenario notes that detail the actual battle, read the axis or allied notes to give you hints on how to play your side of the game, examine the map and study its unique aspects and play the scenario keeping all these other things in mind. In this way, you will get the fullest enjoyment from **Rommel** and become totally involved in trying to either change or maintain history through your actions.

Rommel was everything I expected as the latest venture from SSG and more. The program has the right combination of graphics, sound, menus and strategy to keep any war gamer happy. The scenarios vary in length, as well as difficulty, to accommodate people of all skill levels. If you're looking for a very simple war game that takes 10 minutes to play, don't buy **Rommel**. It is instead intended for the serious, thoughtful war gamer of WWII who likes to plan out multiple strategies, play out those strategies and maybe even change history.

Name: Rommel
Type: Strategy
Formats: Apple, C64 (reviewed)
Publisher: Strategic Studies Group
Distributor: Electronic Arts
Designers: Roger Keating,
Ian Trout, Mark Holman,
Phil Niven and David Freer
Ages: 10 and above
Players: Two
Price: \$39.95

Difficulty:	Average
Packaging:	Excellent (9)
Documentation:	Very Good (7)
Realism:	Very Good (7)
Playability:	Excellent (9)

CP RATING 8.20

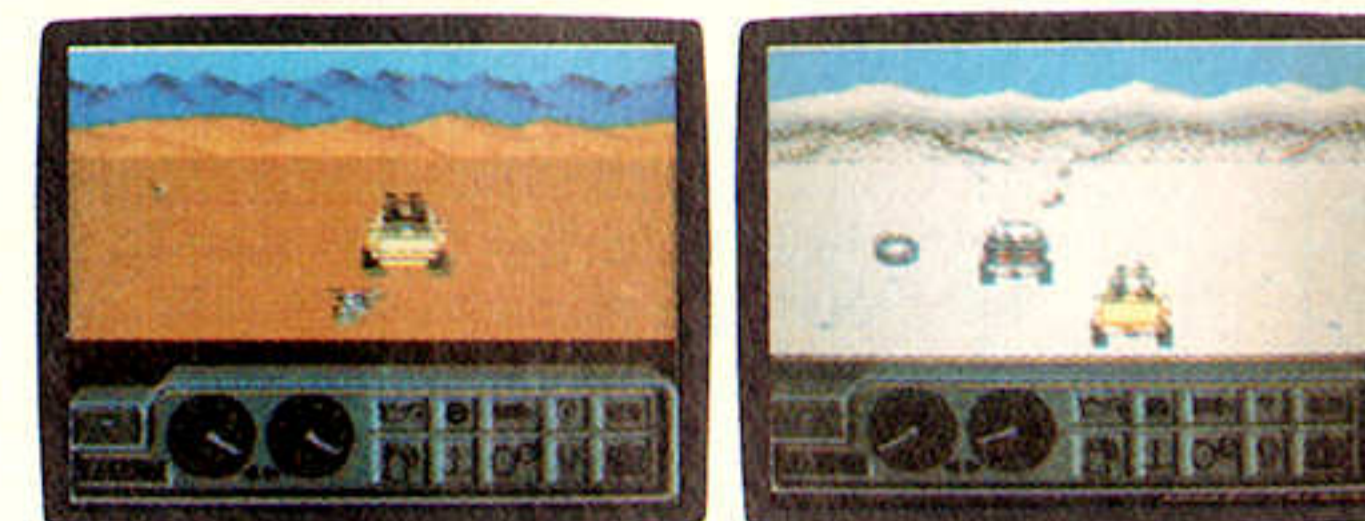
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Photo courtesy of 4-Wheel & Off-Road Racing Magazine.



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BY EPYX**

Commodore 64/128, IBM & compatibles, Amiga

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Circle Reader Service Number 44.

Fighting World War One and a Half

by J.L. Miller

EMPIRE is a continuation of INTERSTEL'S Star Fleet world; billed as a grand tactical simulation of world invasion, in fact, Empire is an updated version of a former mainframe simulation.

INTERSTEL had previously published Star Fleet as a similar update, and as before, the company has done a laudatory job of taking a public domain "bare-bones" game and making it into an excellent entertainment package. While **EMPIRE** is ostensibly an extension of the Star Fleet world, it actually postulates a technology level more akin to that of World War One and a Half. Thus, unit types are composed of army, fighter aircraft, troop transport, submarine, destroyer, cruiser, aircraft carrier and battleship.

The reason I state that the technology level is more akin to World War 1.5 is that tactically, the aircraft carrier does not come into its own; instead, the battleship is the true "carrier" of victory.

Admirals Beatty and Jellicoe would feel right at home.

DOCUMENTATION

The documentation is very good; I especially appreciate the index.

The rules are relatively complete as to play, and the only areas of less than crystal clarity concern the game save features and the different maps included in the original disk; however, these are minor issues. While the disk is unprotected and a play backup disk is strongly recommended, the protection scheme utilizes the familiar documentation check ("First word of Line 3 on Page 47"). A Command Reference Card displays all commands in a handy format.

After an initial perusal of the full rulebook, this reference guide will be more than sufficient for future play.

With pull-down menus and relatively easy access, **EMPIRE** is a gamer's game.

THE PLAY

EMPIRE is a true wargame.

By using the random map generator, you are completely unfamiliar with the terrain; this presents a "fog of war" absent in the more traditional and historical simulations. Since you start out with only one city, that is the limit of your knowledge as to the world.

Everything else is blank, and only movement into or over flight of additional terrain will fill in the blank spots (and there area lot of these!). Conquest is the res gestae; each city can produce one type of unit.

Thus, rapid expansion is necessary in order to derive an optimum mix of unit types and to prevent your opponents from maximizing their forces.

Since **EMPIRE** requires total conquest (no limited wars here!), expansion should be made as quickly as possible.

McClellanesque generals (i.e. those with



the "slows") will find themselves relegated to the trash bins of history. Combat is single entry; although you might have six armies available, only one at a time can "see the elephant".

Army and fighter aircraft have the same value in terms of offense/defense; the latter does have five times the range per turn, but takes twice as long to produce.

Naval vessels have more punch, but their effects are limited to coastal areas and their production lead time can be very long.

Only the PBI (poor bloody infantry) can seize cities; no matter what the technology, there is always a need for the poor ground pounder. But production is the key to success or failure.

Each city may be geared to produce a type of unit, and will keep producing such units until directed otherwise.

Armies are relatively quick to produce, but their low maneuverability yields a slow-moving game; at the other extreme, battleships can take as long as 60 turns to produce.

Once a unit is produced in a city, additional units of the same type are produced 20% faster. The most important units are army and transports.

The army seizes the terrain while the transports guarantee the ability of the army to project its power anywhere in the "world".

Everything else is a guarantor of support.

TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

(1) Initial production must be the army.

Nothing else can seize and hold key ter-

rain (cities); after seizing your first city, a fighter aircraft maybe built.

This will allow better reconnaissance; early commitment of fighters to combat is non-utilitarian.

(2) Look at your world.

If your initial city is located on a solitary island, expansion will be VERY slow; my recommendation would be to reboot the game, and hope for an initial land mass holding at least four cities. Production therein should be army, aircraft, troop transport and battleship.

(3) The battleship is the true dreadnaught of **EMPIRE**.

Useful for land bombardment and decisive at sea battles, you should begin early construction of battleships.

Aircraft carriers can carry up to 8 fighters, but their fragility and lack of punch does not make them the Queen of the Seas.

A single battleship can often destroy a full carrier complement of aircraft.

(4) Troop transports (which carry up to 6 armies) are necessary for expansion.

However, three transports are usually sufficient (as long as they are protected by escorting vessels).

(5) Destroyers are valid for naval reconnaissance; however, they cannot be utilized for land bombardment.

Thus, a mere destroyer screen is sufficient; the destroyer can also be useful for exploration of the world.

Just don't expect its survival in a hostile environment.

(6) Submarines are mean and dastardly vessels of war.

Use them often! Their relative economy of production coupled with their offensive power make them into Hunter-Killers of the Sea.

But they are no match for an alert battleship properly screened.

(7) Use fighter aircraft to find the enemy, but use armies or battleships to fix and destroy the opponent.

(8) Monitor production continuously.

Produce armies at the front lines and naval vessels in the rear.

Use Flight Path commands to establish a flight corridor which will continuously bring newly-minted aircraft into the FEBA (forward edge of the battle area).

CONCLUSIONS

EMPIRE can be played by up to 3 players — human or computer.

As the game develops, turns become longer and longer; there is simply more to do.

As games last up to 250-500 turns or longer, be prepared for the long haul. Computer opponents can be manipulated into being easy dupes or strategic geniuses.

At the expert level, the computer is a formidable opponent.

Do not get too ambitious too early. Overall, the simulation is quick to learn and fun.

My only negative concerns the total playing time — this is not a simple evening of diversion!

But the "fog of war" and the mechanics of meshing the disparate units into a cohesive force of conquest make **EMPIRE** a game worthy of inclusion in the wargamer's library.

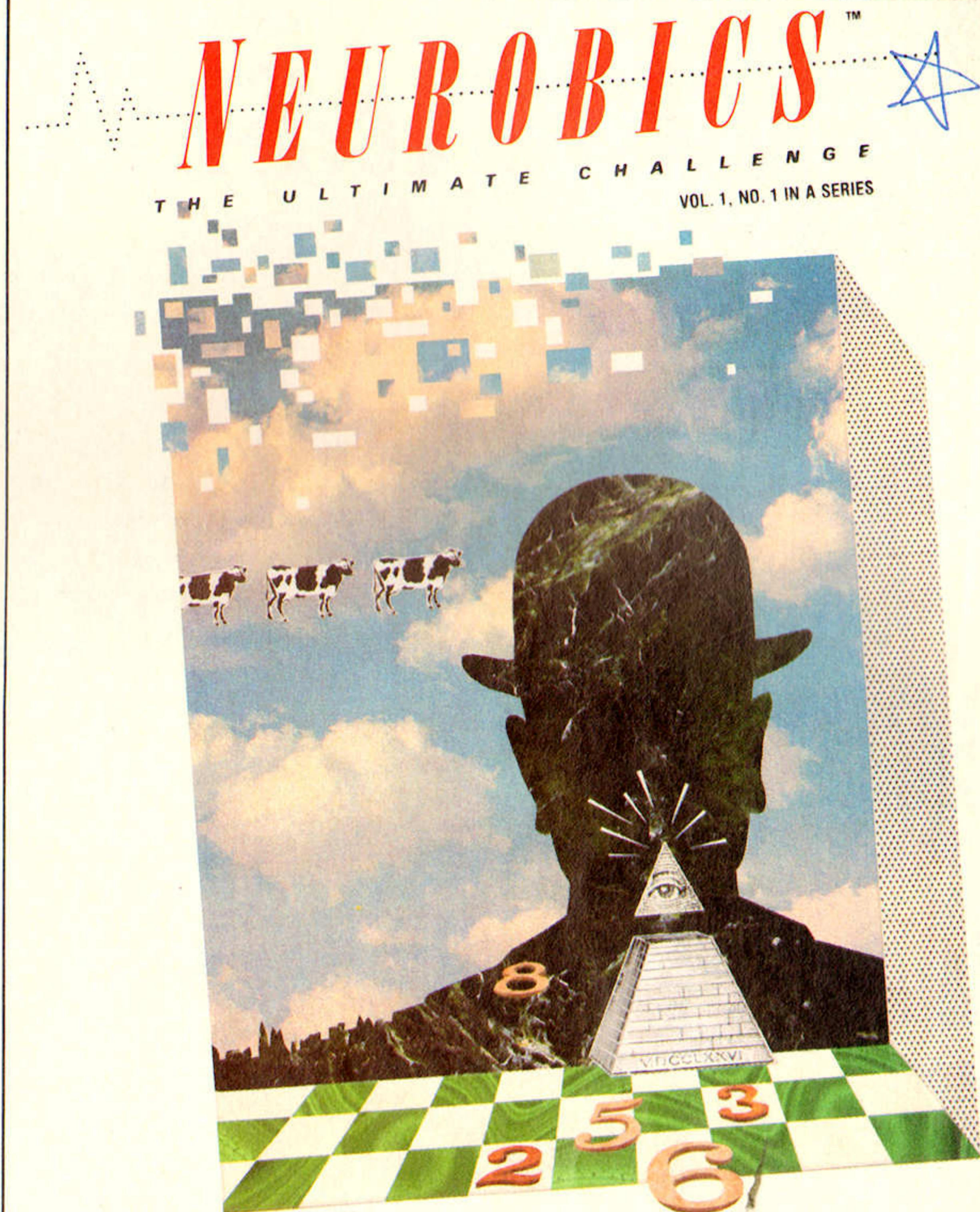
Highly recommended!

Name: EMPIRE
Type: Strategy
Formats: IBM, Atari ST
Publisher: Interstel Corporation
Designers: Walter Bright and Mark Baldwin
Ages: Teen-Adult
Requirements: CGA/EGA
Players: 0-3
Price: \$49.95

Ability level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (7)
Documentation: Good (6.5)
Graphics/Text: Good (6.5)
Realism: Average (6)
Playability: Excellent (9)

CP Rating: 7.74

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Flight Simulator Special

Welcome again, to another special feature, the second in a series that will be appearing in COMPUTER PLAY. The exciting world of flight simulators is examined this month by Fred Blechman, our resident expert and former Navy fighter pilot. So sit back, strap yourself in and get ready to take off.



The control panel of the Falcon AT. (see page 2, On the Cover).

By Fred Blechman

Flight simulator programs for microcomputers have become more and more sophisticated. In the September issue of Computer Play I reviewed FALCON, one of the most recent and most complex simulators. In the October issue I reviewed Hellcat Ace, one of the earliest (and simplest) flight simulators for the IBM PC.

In this issue, I'm reviewing four fixed-wing and two helicopter flight simulators. These range from pure flying to arcade battle action. Some are easy to learn, others take many hours.

Points Worth Noting

(1) These reviews are presented in the order tested. I may have become more difficult to please as I went from one to the next — and

certainly became less tolerant of the unnecessary complexity of some programs. I am biased toward simplicity (Hellcat Ace is still my favorite for pure fun!), and I personally do not wish to spend days getting competent with a program. You may feel otherwise and enjoy the challenge of a very complex program.

(2) All reviews were conducted with my standard speed IBM PC/XT using 360K 5-1/4" disk drives, 640K of RAM, CGA and Hercules graphics boards, a Taxan 420 RGB monitor, and three different joysticks — a CH FlightStick, a Kraft Premium II, and a generic. I did not test EGA or VGA graphics. Due to space limitations, I've only covered the major features of these simulators. They all have much more that could be written about them, and they all offer many, many hours of diversion.

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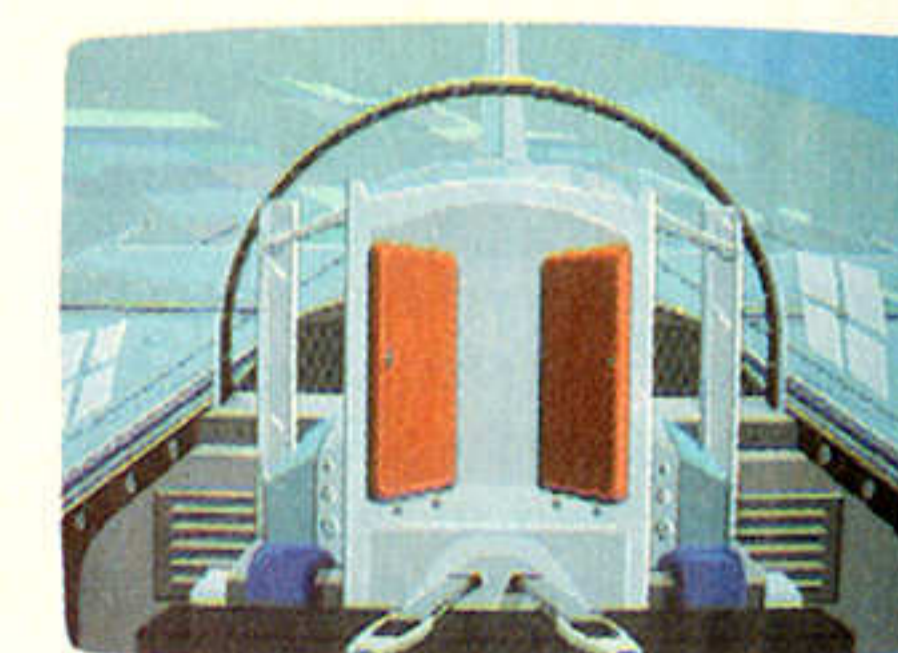
Multiple skill levels, technically accurate head-up-displays, actual flight characteristics, multiple views, multiple targets, Black Box flight recorder, and complete weapons system are just a few of the features that set FALCON AT above all other flight simulations. Due to the unsurpassed realism of FALCON AT, it has been selected as the basis for a simulator for the military. Whether you are an experienced "top gun" or a novice pilot, FALCON AT is for you.

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THE F-16 FIGHTER SIMULATION

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"It's the best flight simulator yet put on a microcomputer..." John Dvorak — San Francisco Examiner.

FALCON: "Just another flight simulator like a Ferrari is just another car." PC Resource, July '88.

The New Version 3.0 Takes Off

For several years, the real test of a computer's compatibility with the IBM PC was whether it would run the Microsoft Flight Simulator program. Because of the intensive use of the keyboard and detailed screen graphics, this program proved to be a rigid test of the hardware — and also a test of the patience of the user.

As flight simulators go, including Version 2, this one was not very exciting. It was designed for accuracy rather than entertainment. The simulated plane was slow and sluggish to fly. The program was particularly resentful of most joysticks, and provided no means of calibration. While there was a lot of attention paid to details of navigation and scenery, and the accuracy of control response (cut power or add flaps and the nose dropped, for example), the program could be considered boring from an entertainment sense — except during landings, where avoiding a crash or terrible landing was almost an impossibility without a great deal of practice.

However, it has been a big hit. Many private pilots practiced basic flying techniques and navigational skills at home on their computer. Some commercial pilots improved their instrument scanning ability by practicing with the **Flight Simulator**. Some pilots planned actual flights and went through the simulation before taking their own plane on an actual flight.

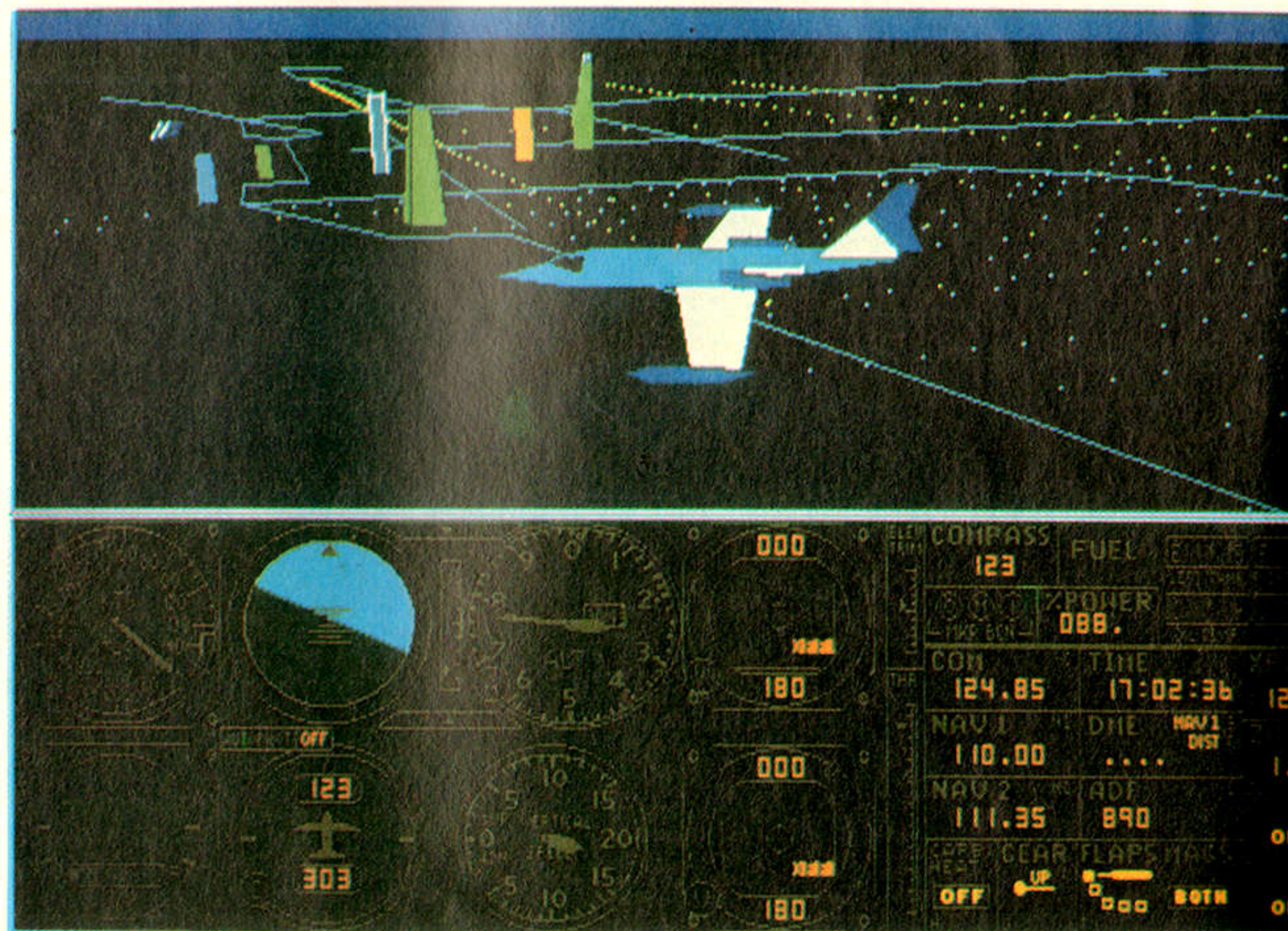
New Version 3.0

The new Flight Simulator Version 3.0 includes past features, but a lot more. Those with EGA and VGA equipment can have better graphic resolution and more colors. The new program provides control menus, multiple view windows, and lots of new scenarios — even carrier landings!

Just to give you an idea of the sophistication of this program, 47 important aircraft characteristics are considered. You can look out the front windshield (or seven other views around the plane) to three-dimensional scenery (buildings, bridges, roads, lakes, etc.). The instrumentation is that specified by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) for VFR (Visual Flight Rules) and IFR (Instrument Flight Rules).

The new **Flight Simulator's** graphics present solid-modeled images without hidden lines, and with surface shading, with the detail and quality adjusted to make the best use of whatever display adapter (CGA, EGA, PS/2) you are using.

Flight Simulator's "world" includes the continental United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. These are broken up into "populated" areas that include 118 airports indicated on five folding charts that show the aeronautical details of the New York/Boston, Central and Northern Illinois, Seattle, Los An-



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Air Warrior was developed by Kesmai Corporation, a world leader in multi-player simulation and entertainment products.

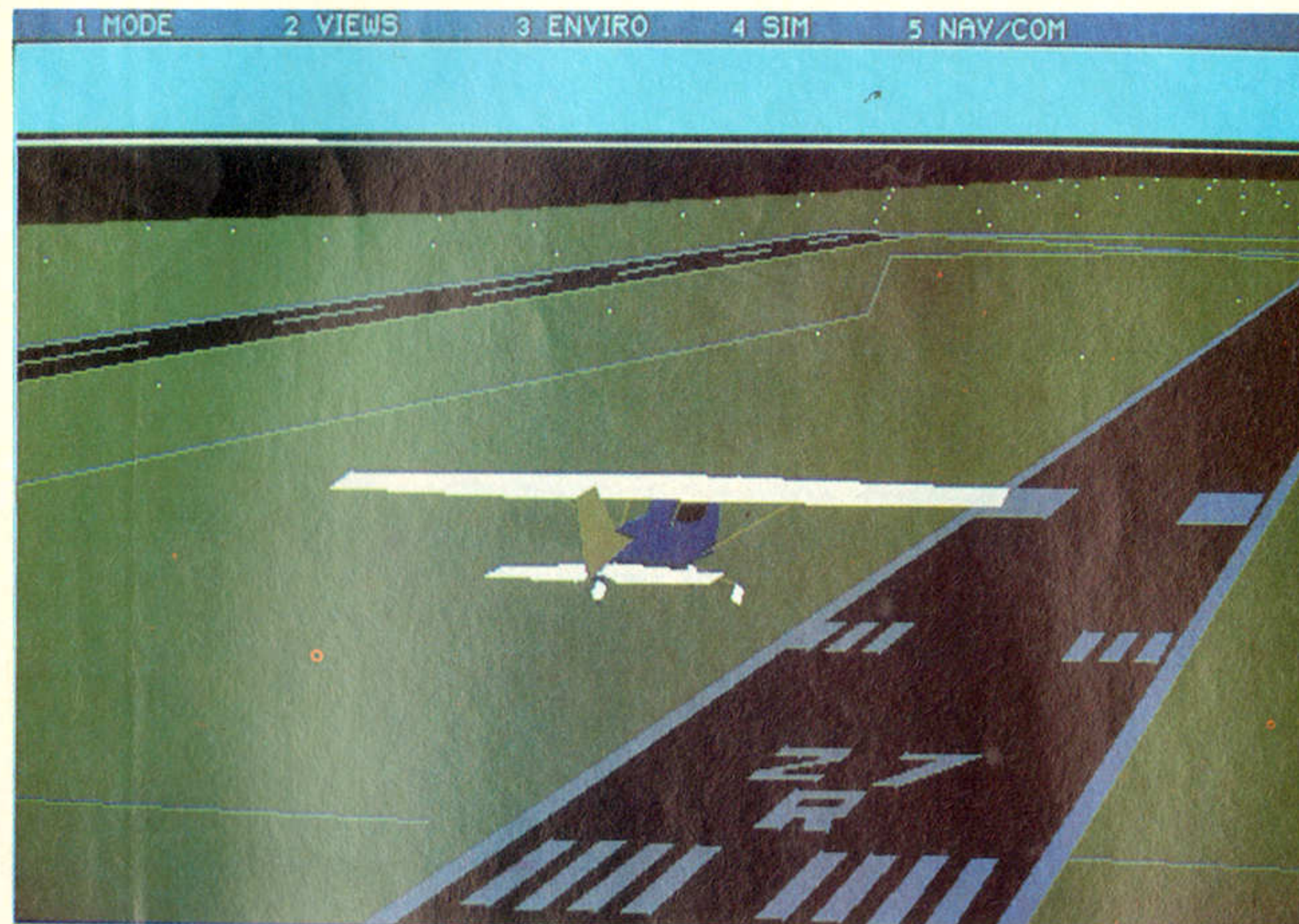
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◀ 28

geles and San Francisco/Oakland areas. Detailed information about these airports are included in charts in the manual.

Some private pilots prefer Flight Simulator over the more official simulating tools in airports and flying schools because Flight Simulator lets them set environmental conditions such as wind, clouds, and time of day for dawn, day, dusk and night flights. A host of navigational aids are also included.

As a convenience to new pilots, on-screen real-time flying lessons and varying degrees of difficulty are provided. If you've never flown before you can use the basic lessons by watching the instructor as he controls the airplane through the particular lesson you've selected (from taxiing to acrobatics) and then trying it yourself. The program even provides feedback in the form of flight-path and performance graphs at the end of your lesson.

Three aircraft are simulated — a Cessna 182 class, a Learjet 25G class, and a World War I Sopwith Camel. Various entertainment scenarios (crop dusting, formation flying, multi-player flight and a World War I simulation) provide endless hours of practice and challenge. For example, within the Formation Fly-



ing Option you get to choose from seven sub-scenarios: San Francisco Obstacle Course, Walls In the Sky, Bridges and Towers, Manhattan Tour, Chicago Night Flight, WWI Hanger Buzz and NAS North Island Carrier. In each case you attempt to fly formation on a lead plane that trails smoke so you can see the flight path. World War I Ace appears to be the same as the original Flight Simulator — a three-dimensional battle game that lets you test your flying skills in bombing runs and in dogfights against computer-controlled enemy planes. Shoot down five enemy fighters and you become an ace.

Flying Flight Simulator 3.0

The original Flight Simulator program, as already mentioned, was pretty boring and sluggish, and yet an effective training tool. It was not, however, very entertaining. The new Flight Simulator is positively addictive! I have spent many hours with 3.0 and still feel I have not much more than scratched the surface of the many features of this program. Several times I planned to spend just a few minutes to refresh myself on a particular point, and ended up spending an hour or more checking features I had not looked into previously!

A description of "The Information Manual and Flight Handbook" should give you a clue that this is not a program to be approached casually. This beautifully printed 238-page manual includes a 23-page small-print detailed Index. It is profusely illustrated with clear diagrams and charts. I would suggest that if you intend to get anything approaching the full value available from this program you should curl up with this manual for several hours before even approaching your computer with the program disks.

You'll need to have at least one double-

sided 5-1/4" disk drive and a graphics card — CGA, EGA, VGA or Hercules. The program is supplied on two 5-1/4" diskettes that are almost completely full with a total of 134 files! I found no indication of the availability of 3.5" disks. However, the files are not protected, so backup copies can be made and the files can be copied to 3.5" microdiskettes.

One of the files is a README.DOC file that, if you send it to your printer with COPY README.DOC PRN, prints four pages of information not found in the manual.

A DEMO program is provided that takes about 25 minutes and then repeats although you can interrupt it anytime. It starts with a Cessna takeoff viewed from the control tower and the cockpit, then a day/dusk flight around Chicago. Next, the jet takes off from Oakland, flies over a bridge and then UNDER the Golden Gate Bridge. Next the demo shows a touch-and-go landing aboard an aircraft carrier followed by a flight over Manhattan and out to the Statue of Liberty. The demo ends with different cloud environments, as well as night flying under the stars. It's worth watching, since many of the features available in the program are shown.

If you have a mouse or a joystick, you can control various functions with these rather than the keyboard. I did not try a mouse, but I tried three joysticks. The program goes through a calibration routine for joysticks which makes it far more tolerant than the original Flight Simulator. I found a CH Products FlightStick worked best.

Control response, screen updating and scrolling, and advanced features are all significant improvements over most of the flight simulator programs I've tested. This is really the Cadillac of the bunch but takes a lot of time and patience to get comfortable with. I'm still learning.

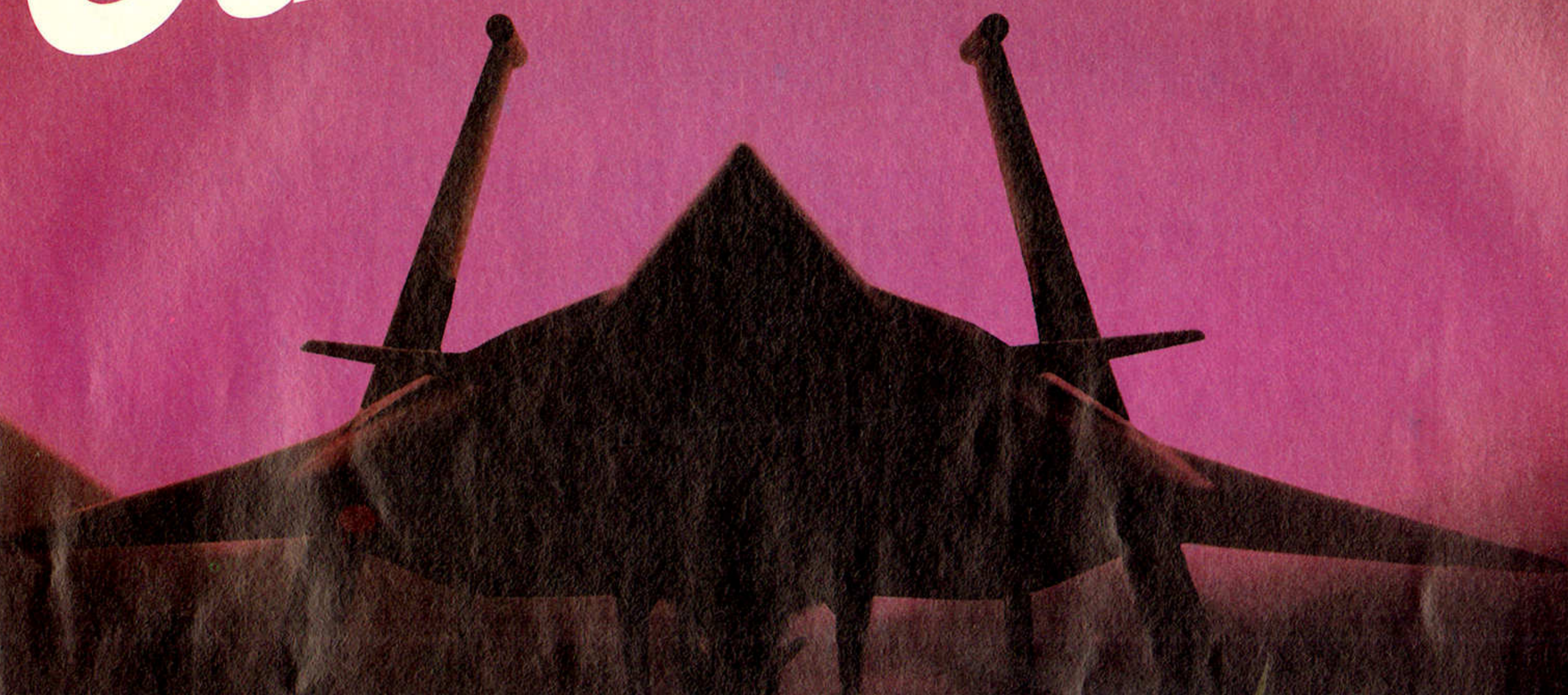
Name: Microsoft Flight Simulator 3.0
Type: Aircraft Simulation
Formats: IBM PC/XT/AT or Personal System/2
Publisher: Microsoft Corporation
Designer: Bruce A. Artwick
Ages: 12 to adult
Requirements: CGA, EGA, VGA or Hercules graphics
Players: One or two
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Excellent (9)
Documentation: Excellent (9)
Graphics: Very Good (8.5)
Realism: Very Good (7.5)
Playability: Excellent (9)

CP Rating: 8.75

Circle Reader Service Number 19.

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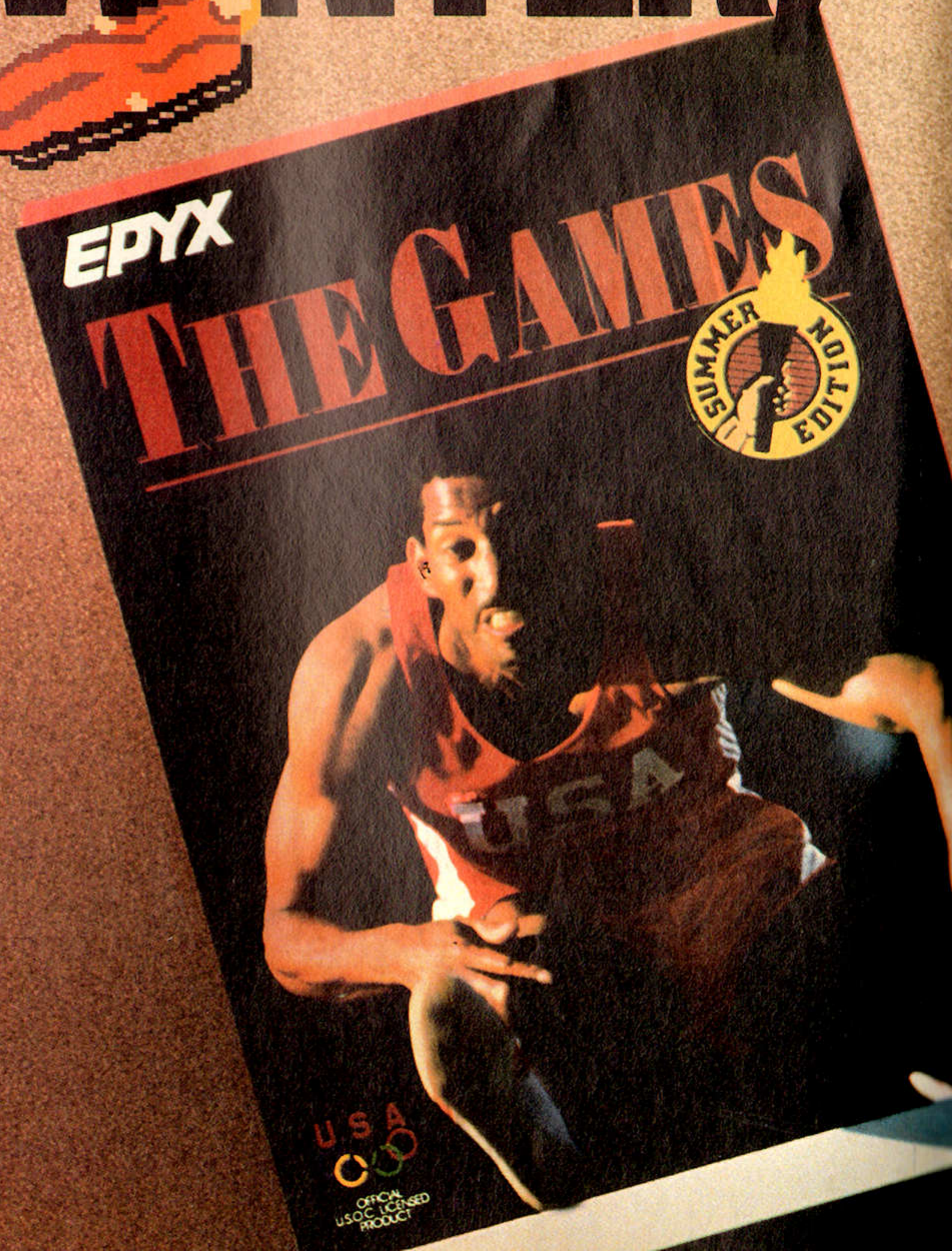
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You'll find that The Games will keep you in the mountains, in the water and on the edge of your seat all year long.



Commodore 64/128, Apple II & Compatibles, Macintosh, IBM & Compatibles, Amiga.
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Circle Reader Service Number 38.

EPYX

The Deceptively Complex Simulator

After spending about 20 hours trying to test out the many, many features and options of Microsoft's new Flight Simulator, I decided to next look at ACE, since it looked like it wouldn't be much of a challenge. I was wrong!

On the face of it, ACE seems simple enough. The cost is low (only \$19.95, and I bought it at Egghead Software for only \$14.99), and the documentation (they call it "Sealed Orders" —

For Your Eyes Only") consists of just two sides of printing on a small sheet of paper. The non-copy protected 5-1/4" diskette (no 3.5" microdiskette is offered) contains only six files that total less than 90K bytes of program and data, compared with the 134 files consuming 717K for Flight Simulator — so how complex could ACE be?

This is all deceptive. ACE is an arcade-type flight simulator that is addictive once you get past some annoying omissions in the documentation. I found myself spending over six hours glued to the screen and joystick trying to shoot down enemy delta wing fighters to beat my previous score, and to refuel before going dry. Twice I spent at least 45 minutes chasing around the refueling tanker only to crash into it when I finally got close enough to see it!

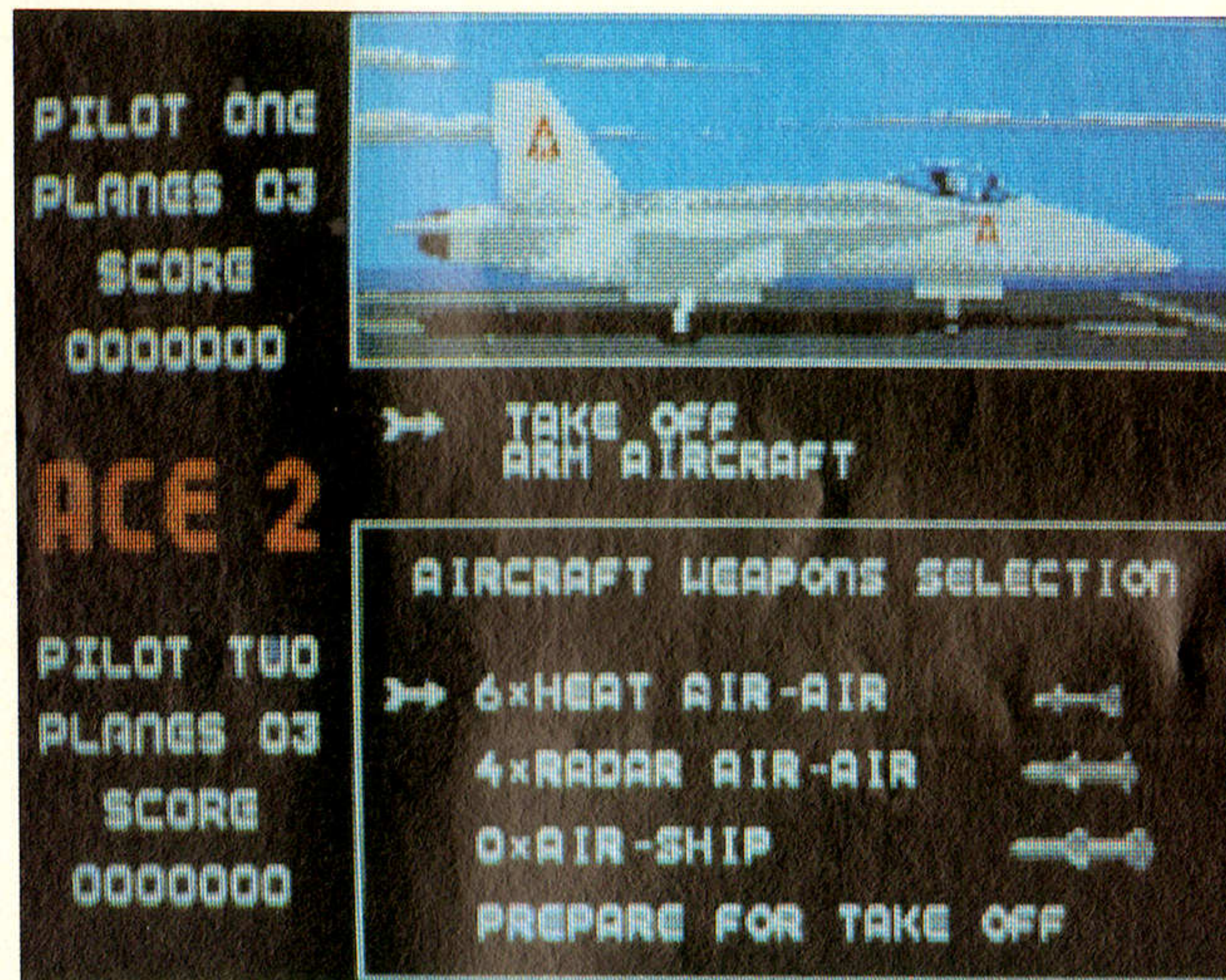
The Scenario

A huge enemy fleet has invaded the southern shore of the United States. Dozens of tanks and helicopter gunships are rolling over Tampa, Florida and through Atlanta, Georgia. Squadrons of enemy fighters are swarming through the air over South Carolina heading for Washington, D.C. You are the only remaining fighter pilot, and you have the last three ACE Mark 2.1 Multi-Role All-Weather All-Terrain (AWAT) combat aircraft.

Your mission is to attack and destroy the numerically superior enemy air and ground forces. Only then can you attempt to destroy their nearly invincible Navy. The future of the free world hangs in the balance. Do you feel up to it?

Flying ACE

The program is easy to get going. Just boot up in DOS and type ACE and hit Enter. If you have separate Hercules and CGA boards, as I do, you first need to use MODE CO80 from your DOS disk to transfer to the CGA display.



The program presents a graphic screen immediately followed by program author credits and a copyright notice. At the bottom of the screen you'll see a graphic tank, helicopter, delta wing fighter, and warship, with scoring points for each. Although I tried all the game functions, I never saw a tank, helicopter, or ship during a game — but LOTS of delta wing fighters!

The next screen offers a menu of options, including several not covered by the Sealed Orders. There are nine skill levels. I'd suggest you stay at #1 for quite awhile, unless you enjoy getting wiped out by enemy surface-to-air or air-to-air missiles.

You can choose Summer, Night or Winter flights, which only change screen colors. If you have only a monochrome monitor with

your CGA board, use Night. A DEMO mode is provided, but they don't tell you that ESCAPE gets you out of it.

You can select joystick or keyboard, but there is no provision for calibrating the joystick you use. The Kraft joystick was stiff, but gave me the best control. The CH was okay, but I found a tendency to overcontrol with it. The generic joystick (which appears to be a converted Apple joystick) caused a crash on takeoff — even before adding power — unless the trimmers were set just right.

Not documented, but on the screen menu, is a SOUND ON/OFF selection. You might find the sound annoying, but I liked it. The engine sound changes with thrust setting, and you can hear the cannons or missiles when they're fired.

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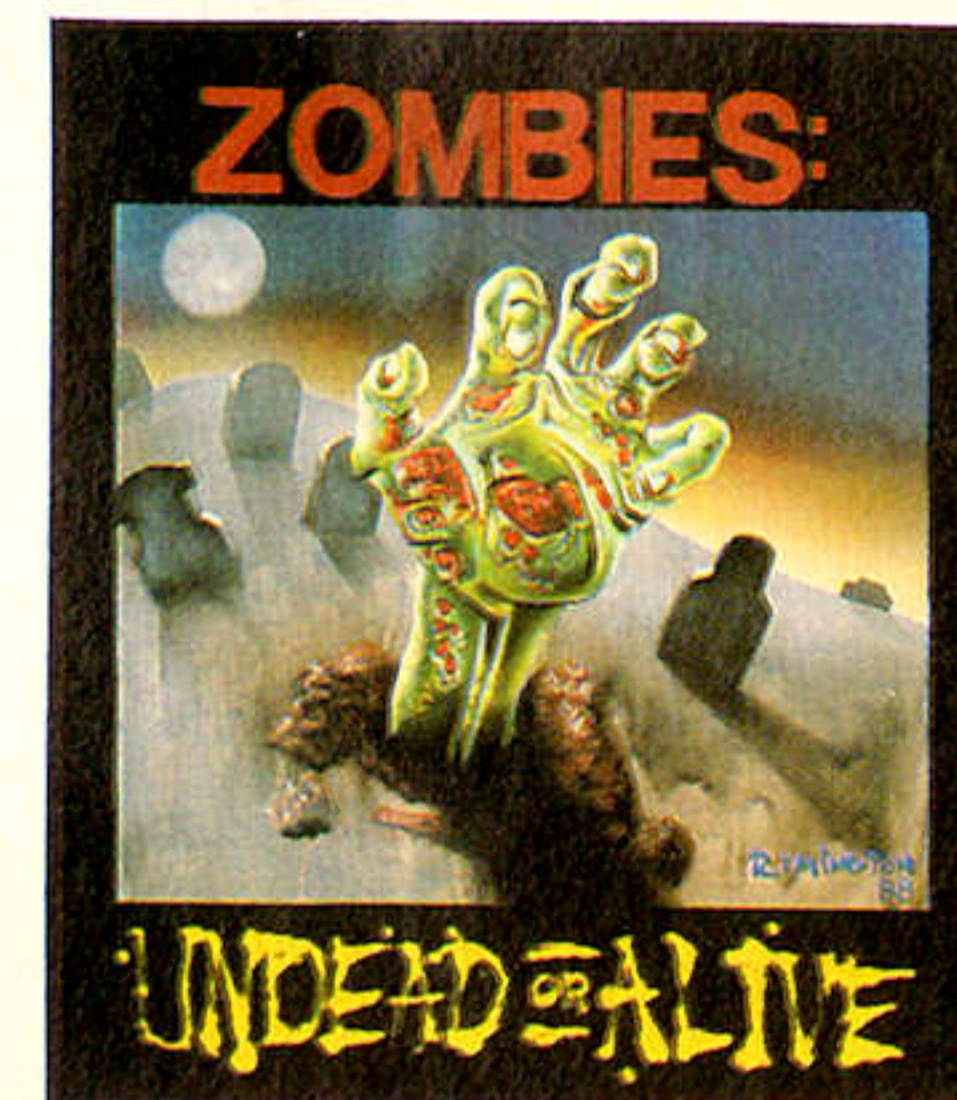
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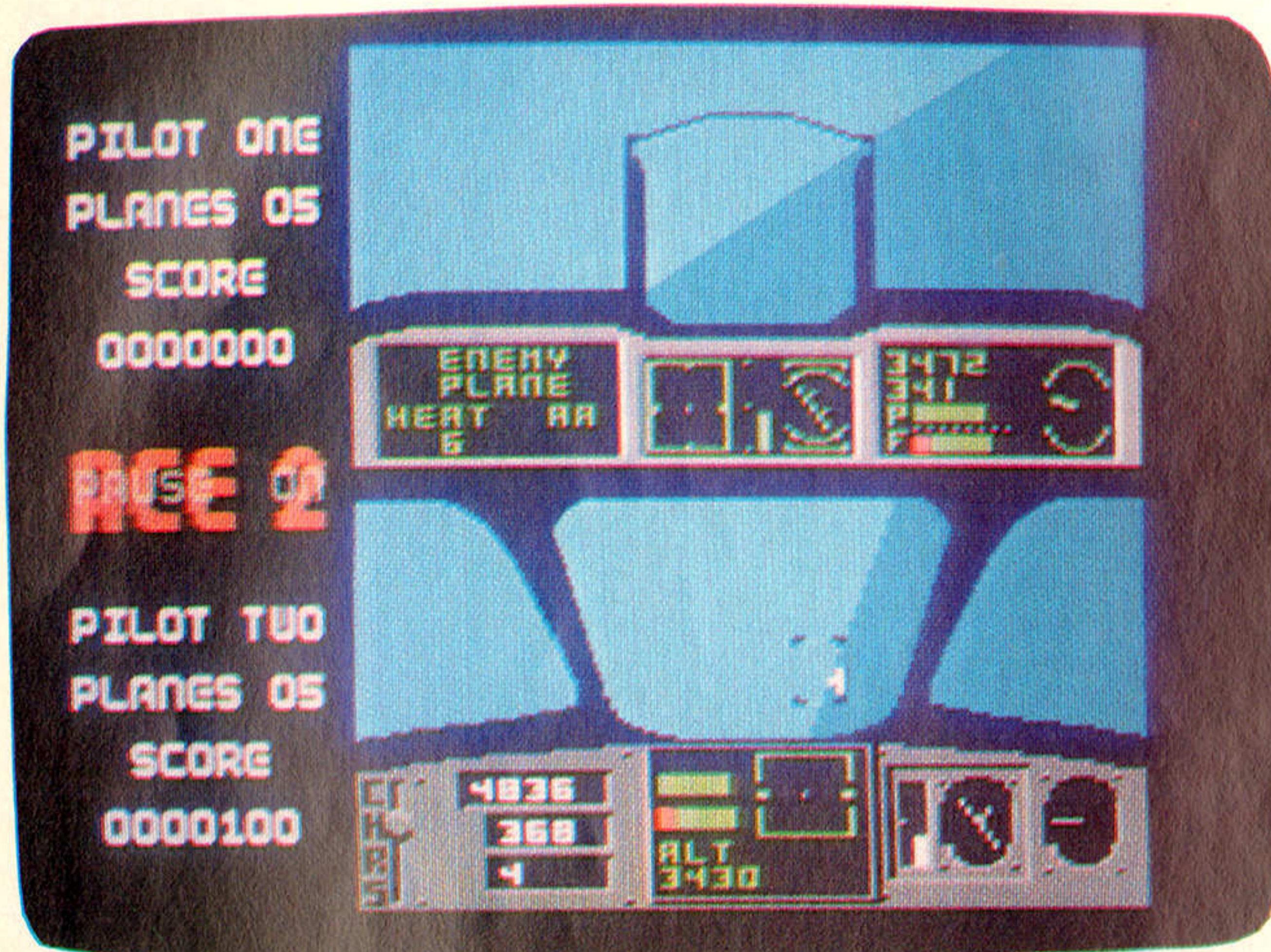
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◀ 34

Once you've decided what options you want, another screen lets you select a weapon load for your mission: multi-role, air superiority, naval attack or ground attack. For example, you will only be able to use air-to-ship missiles if you select a naval attack.

Finally, you are sitting on the runway looking through your windshield, with various readings on your "instrument panel". If you've chosen a Summer flight, the very readable instrument panel is a bright yellow, with blue lettering and red-bordered instruments.

You have bar-gauges for thrust and fuel, and digital readouts for altitude, velocity and score. A compass, undercarriage (UC) indicator and five panels are provided.

One panel is a "radar" display, which I found virtually useless. Another panel shows a rear and side view of your aircraft to indicate your roll and pitch attitudes. Since the horizon is frequently not in view, these attitude indica-

tors are essential to provide orientation during maneuvering.

A panel is provided for messages, and another panel tells you what armament is active, and the rounds remaining. Last, and as useless as the radar display, is a rear-view camera panel.

Ahead of you is a yellow runway with a red centerline, green grass, and a dark blue sky. You are heading east in the runway mode. You advance the thrust, carefully watching your velocity as you move forward down the runway. When you exceed 150 (knots or mph?) you pull back to lift off the runway and quickly retract your wheels. If you pull up too soon, or exceed 280 knots with your wheels down, you crash and have to start again.

Once airborne and above about 300 feet, a gunsight appears against the blue sky. Pretty soon enemy planes are swarming around you. You must press Enter to select your weapons. The cannons fire from your right wing planes into the target area, and the missiles fire from

the left wing. There is a short time delay from firing until the shells or missiles reach the target, so you must fire before the target is in your sight.

Your plane is extremely maneuverable, yet very stable, so acrobatics are a cinch. Shooting down enemy planes, even though the sky is swarming with them, takes practice. Your AWAT fighter is also very high performance. You can go up to 70,000 feet, and I got to a velocity of 1200 going straight down at full throttle. (I'm fearless!)

The land is green, the sea is dark blue. Night flights use black instead of dark blue, and a Winter flight uses black, white, red and cyan. You are informed when in friendly or enemy territory, and given rendezvous altitude and speed for refueling. A MAP function lets you see where you, enemy forces, allied bases and the refueling tanker are located within the battle zone. The rest is up to you!

I liked ACE a lot once I got it figured out. If you get this program, keep this review, since much said here is not in the Sealed Orders!

Name: ACE Air Combat Emulator
Type: Fighter Simulator
Formats: IBM PC/XT/AT and Commodore 64/128
Publisher: Spinnaker Software (UXB Division)
Designers: Ian Martin/Nigel Stevens/Derek Baker
Ages: 12 to adult
Requirements: CGA, 256K RAM, 5-1/4" 360K drive
Players: One
Price: \$19.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Average (6)
Documentation: Poor (2)
Graphics: Very Good (8)
Realism: Very Good (7)
Playability: Very Good (8)

CP Rating: 6.76
Circle Reader Service Number 18.

Read the Book Before You Fly

Trust me! Don't waste your time trying to fly GUNSHIP by the seat of your pants. I'm not exactly a novice flyer, and had just reviewed the Tomahawk helicopter simulator, but I was thoroughly intimidated by all the things that came with the IBM PC version of GUNSHIP: two 5-1/4" diskettes and a 3-1/2" microdiskette; an 80-page Operations Manual; an 8-page Technical Supplement (for the IBM); and a giant cardboard keyboard overlay! Not only that, but I had a 183-page book (available separately as TAB Book #3032) called "GUNSHIP - 82 Challenging New Adventures", by David Prochnow.

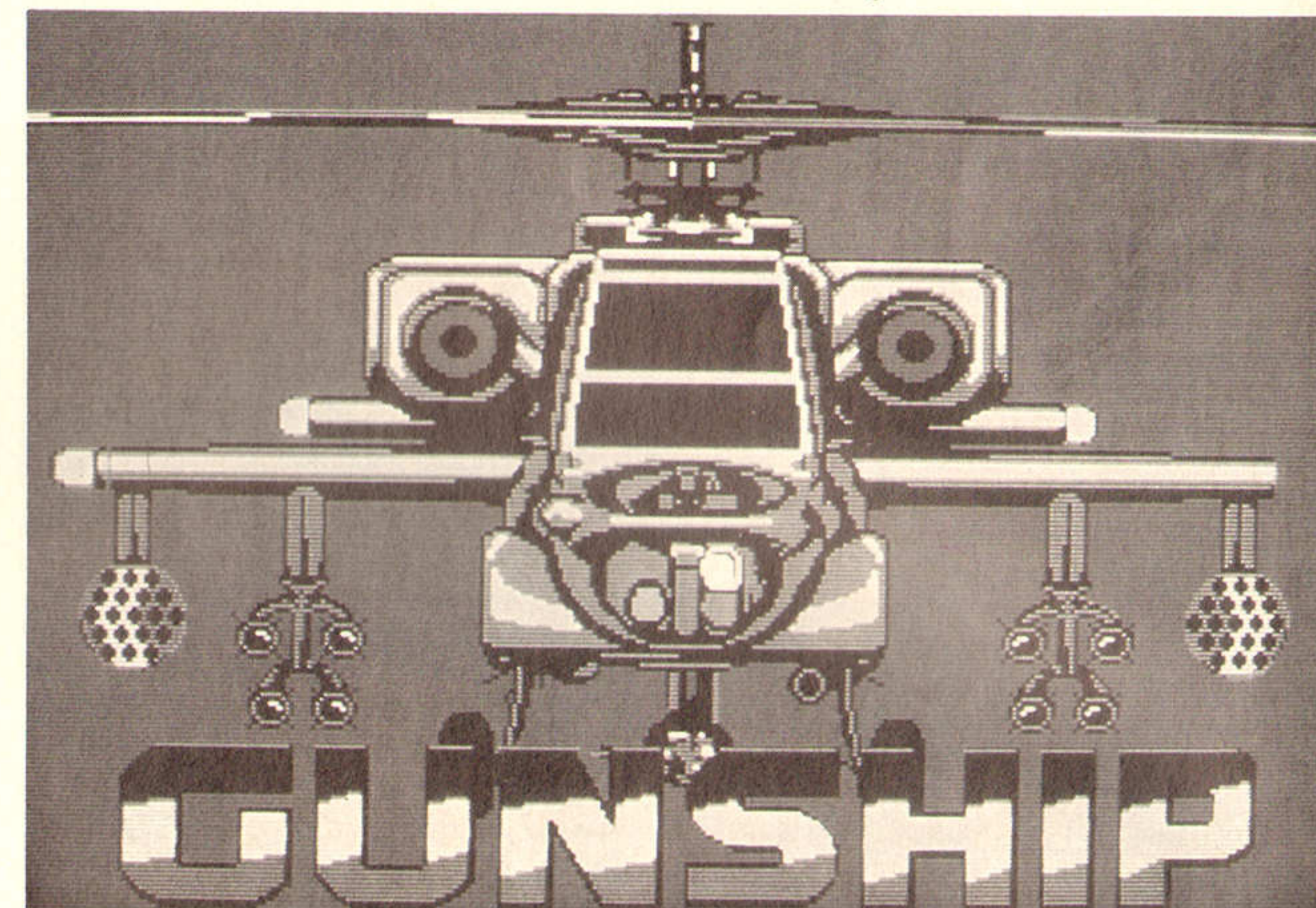
I spent at least three hours reading through this material (it's fascinating!) before even turning on the computer. GUNSHIP is so sophisticated it's scary, and probably overkill for the average game player. This is like some adventure games; it will certainly take you 20 or more hours to really get good at it. If you are willing to devote that kind of time to learning to fly GUNSHIP on realistic missions, you'll find it a continuing challenge to survive the simulated missions in the program and the TAB book.

Both the Operations Manual and the TAB book were highly instructive about the AH-64A Apache attack helicopter on which GUNSHIP (and Tomahawk) are based. Both are liberally illustrated and I would recommend that any GUNSHIP owner go out and immediately buy the TAB book, since the first 48 pages (Chapters 1-4) cover some things in more detail than the GUNSHIP Manual. The rest of the TAB book is devoted to 82 scenarios that take you into actual documented helicopter encounters of the Korean and Vietnam wars which you "relive" with GUNSHIP. Added to the U.S.A., Southeast Asia, Central America, Middle East and Western Europe theaters included with GUNSHIP, you can have no end of battles and come out without a scratch, and maybe a bunch of medals.

Getting Started

It takes almost two minutes to get GUNSHIP airborne from startup using two floppy drives, although this could probably be speeded up if you load GUNSHIP onto a hard disk. The program disks are copy protected, but allow installing onto a hard disk. If you want to put the program back on the diskettes, there is a de-install program (which must be done before installing on another hard disk.)

There are a number of start-up and selection screens. First you answer Y or N to whether a joystick is being used, then you select the display (EGA, CGA, Tandy 1000, Hercules Monochrome). Next there's a MicroProse sign-on screen, then a beautiful GUNSHIP graphic, then a screen crediting Andy Hollis and the names of the other team members that



Your extraordinarily heroic work on this mission was noticed. You receive America's second highest award:

The Distinguished Service Cross.

produced GUNSHIP. This takes over a minute.

But that's not all. Now you are supposed to correctly identify (from 20 choices) a randomly selected graphic that appears on the screen, based on the images shown on pages 54-68 of the Operations Manual. To answer you must move an arrow image to a selection box with either the joystick or keyboard cursor keys, and then press a fire button or Enter. This appears to have no purpose other than to see if you can figure out how to move the arrow, which you need to do on all the following selection screens.

If you answer this "quiz" correctly, the next screen shows a pilot roster (with high scores

and medals earned), then a screen showing the pilot, current duty assignment, flying style, and reality levels, any of which can be changed with the arrow and additional selection screens. Next you have a briefing screen, possibly with a password and a countersign you need to look up in the Manual. This can be a day or night mission — you have no choice.

But you're not finished yet! You may also go through a very detailed sector map, an intelligence report, and even a sick call, before you get to the weapons selection screen. Here you get to choose the type and number of weapons, including cannon, rockets and two types of missiles.

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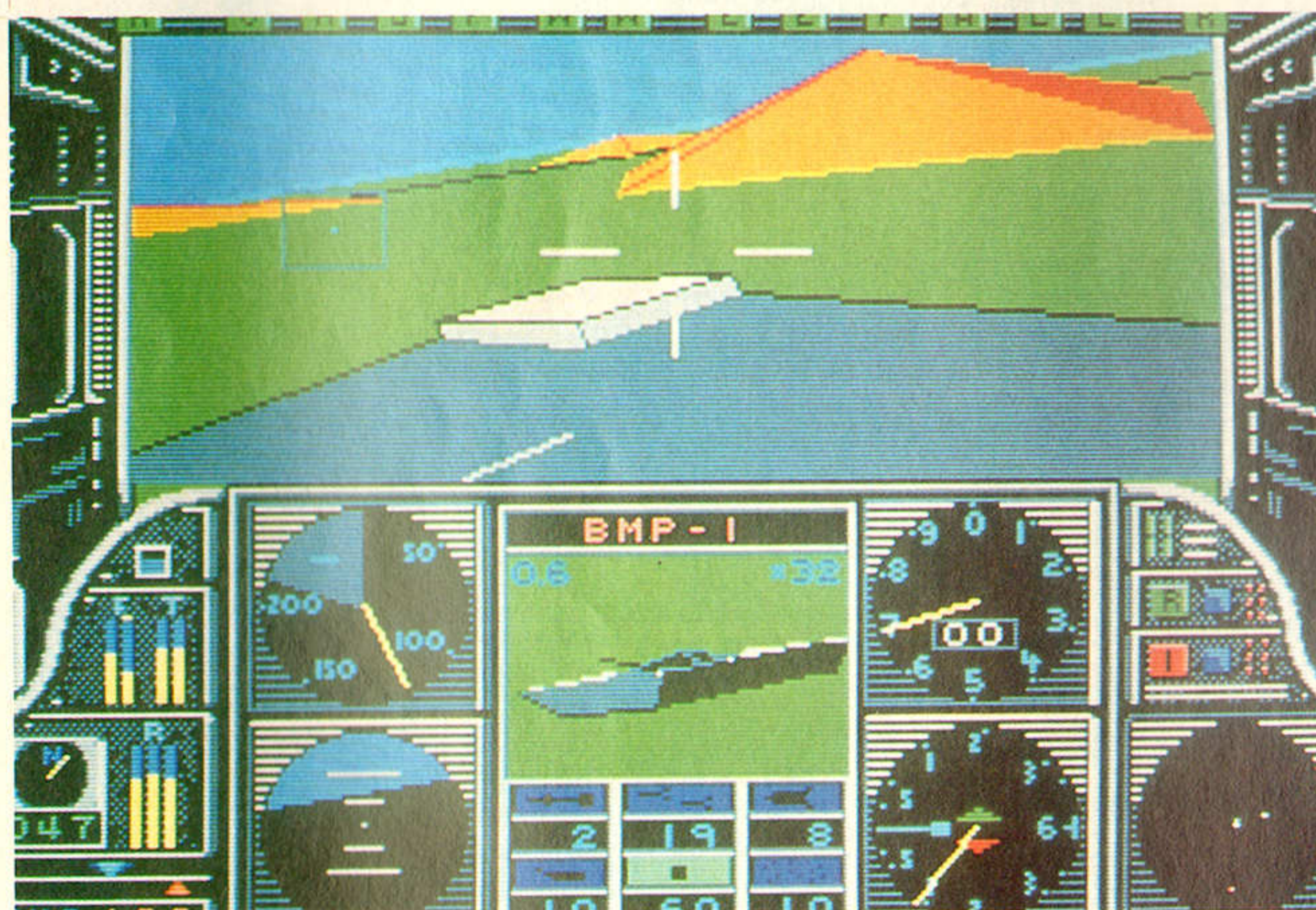
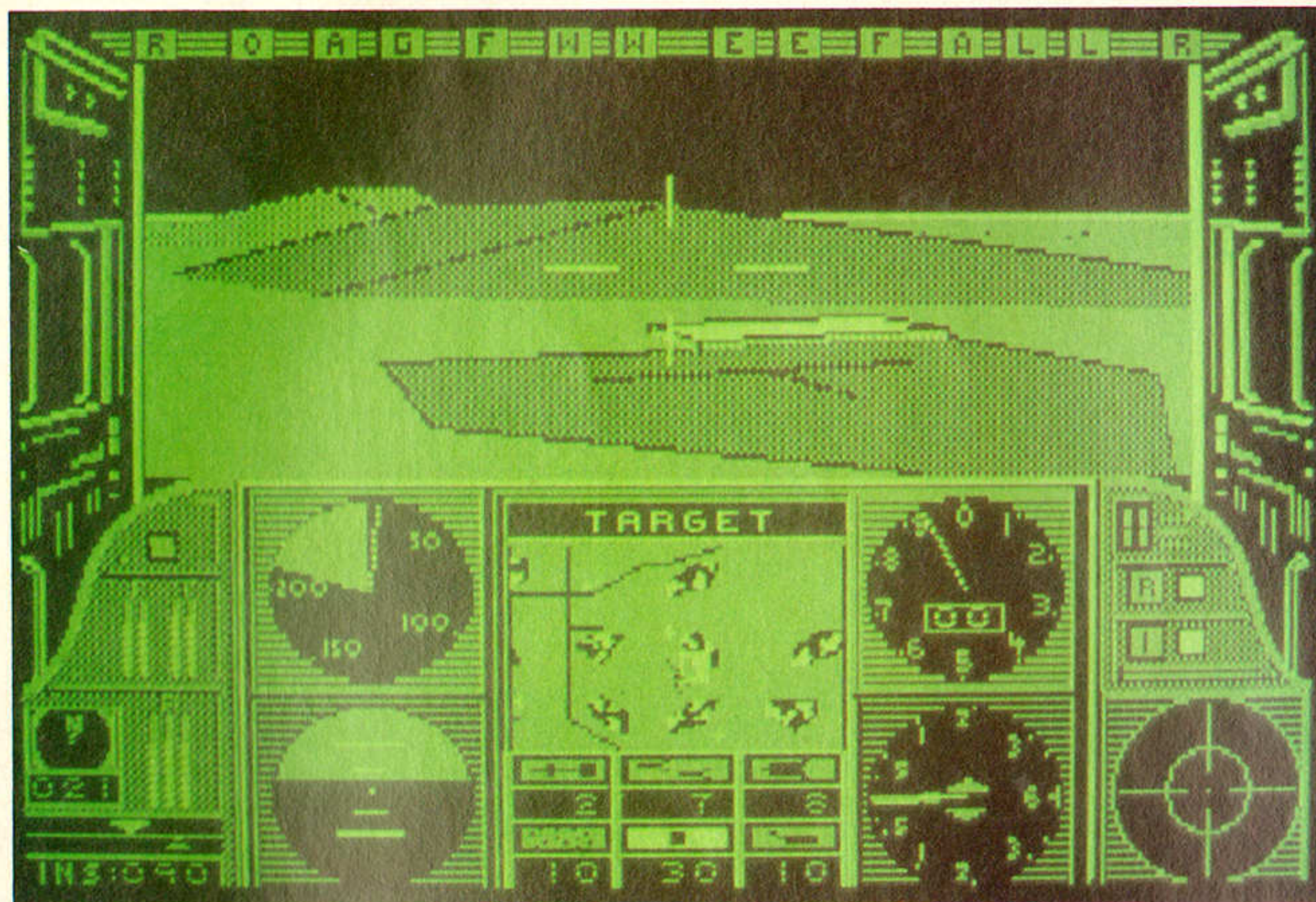
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Attention Dealers:
For further information on Konami's line of computer games, call customer service at (312) 595-1443.



Only Rush 'N Attack and Contra will be available for Amiga in 1988. ©1988, Konami Inc.

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All these screens are intended to add to the realism and versatility of missions, but they take time to go through. Incidentally, if you "fail" the identification quiz mentioned earlier, you are automatically assigned to training in the U.S.A., with no options.

Flying GUNSHIP

Finally, after all this briefing, you get a great view from the cockpit. The instrument panel is very detailed, with 48 (count 'em - 48!) different indicators, dials, gauges, warning lights, digital readouts, and CRT display; and this doesn't count the crosshairs and target gun-

sight when you're airborne! You need to know what most of these indicate or you're a dead duck. That's part of why you should spend a good period of time with the Manual before flying GUNSHIP.

The other reason you'll have to read up on flying GUNSHIP is that it has some peculiar flight characteristics, and they are different from Tomahawk (which also simulates the AH-64A Apache.) I don't have the space to go into details, but the flying technique is easier in some respects than Tomahawk, more difficult in others. It takes getting used to. All controls are very responsive and sensitive, but turns and pitch are very limited. I found I

could not drop the nose sufficiently to aim at some targets as they got close. This makes GUNSHIP far less likely to crash, but limited in target destruction.

I found myself flying GUNSHIP without much difficulty, perhaps because of some experience with Tomahawk. I was able to make safe landings and find my way around the mission area quite nicely. The first training flight I took ran 34 minutes, and was followed by a bunch of information and selection screens before I could fly again. On my third flight I accomplished the complete mission, landed at home base safely and was promoted from Sergeant to Warrant Officer. Of course, it was a U.S.A. practice mission, with only "blanks" being fired at me!

GUNSHIP graphics are absolutely outstanding. All objects are shown solid (not frames, like Tomahawk), and the graphic movement is very smooth. The sound is good and appropriate, and can be defeated if you want to practice in silence. The color choices are excellent, and can be varied with the C keyboard key. I tried three joysticks with GUNSHIP and they all worked fine, but with different amounts of stick control sensitivity. A calibration is performed automatically with the stick centered.

About the only real fault I found with GUNSHIP (besides the many before-and-after flight screens) was the reduced playability due to the complexity of the program; too many choices and too many things happening at once. I believe that after about 20 hours of practice with this program you could become very proficient and it could become your favorite flying program. There is certainly endless variety provided. However, for the casual user, it's too complex.

Name: GUNSHIP
(Trademark of MicroProse Software, Inc.)

Type: Helicopter Simulator

Formats: IBM PC/XT/AT; Commodore 64/128; Atari ST

Publisher: MicroProse Software, Inc.

Project Leader: Andy Hollis

Ages: 15 to adult

Requirements: CGA/EGA/Hercules, 256K RAM, 5-1/4" or 3-1/2" disk drive

Players: One

Prices: IBM or Atari: \$54.95;
Commodore: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Packaging: Very Good (8)

Documentation: Excellent (9)

Graphics: Excellent (9)

Realism: Very Good (8)

Playability: Very Good (7)

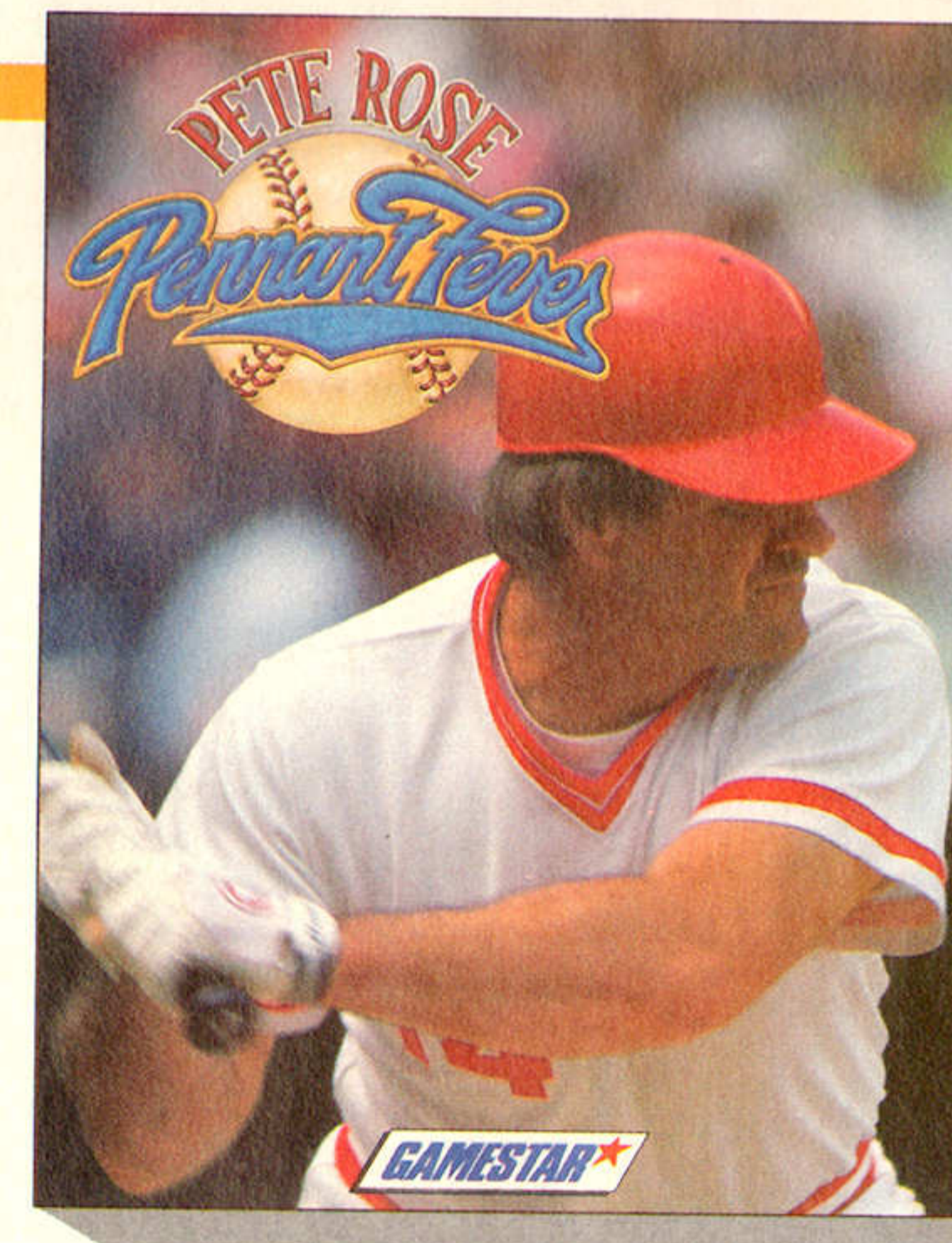
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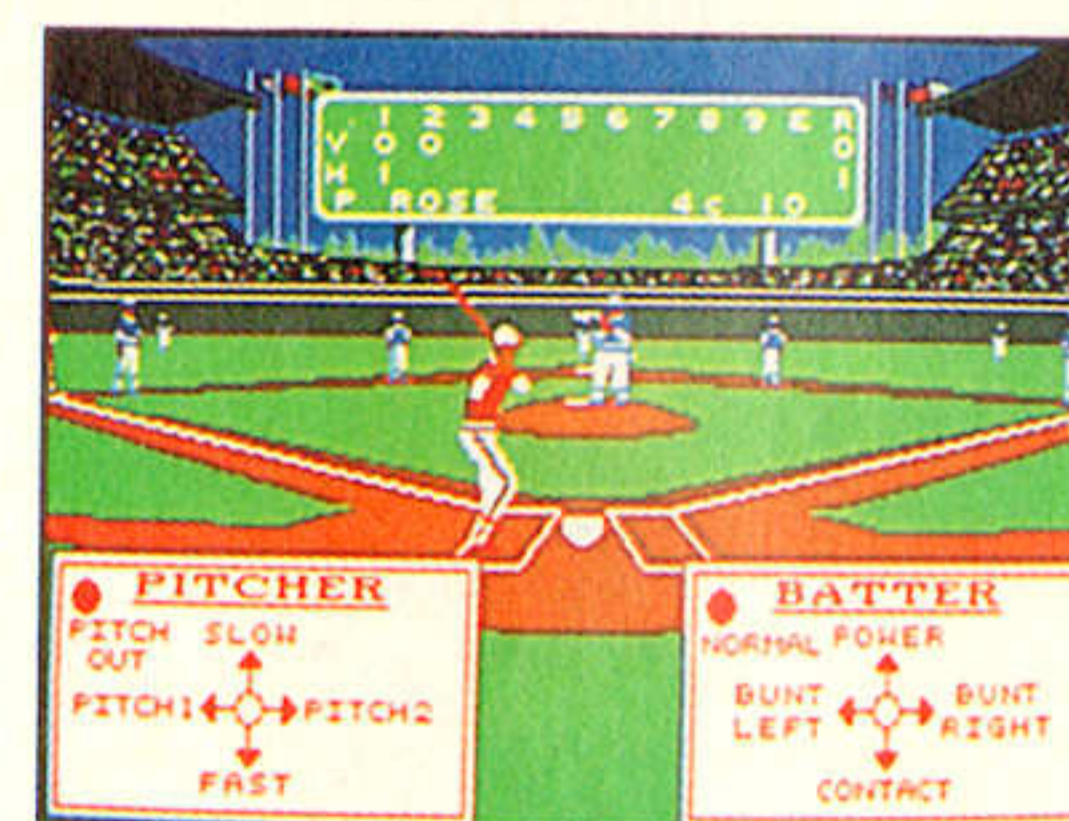
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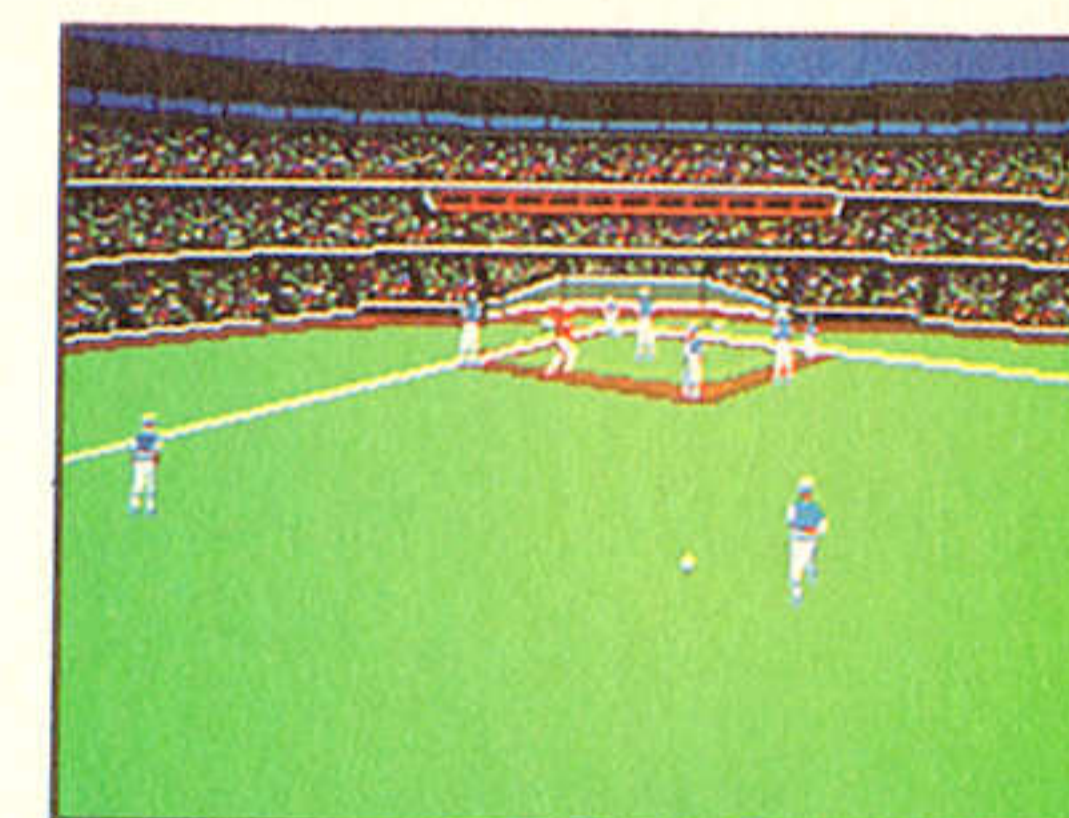
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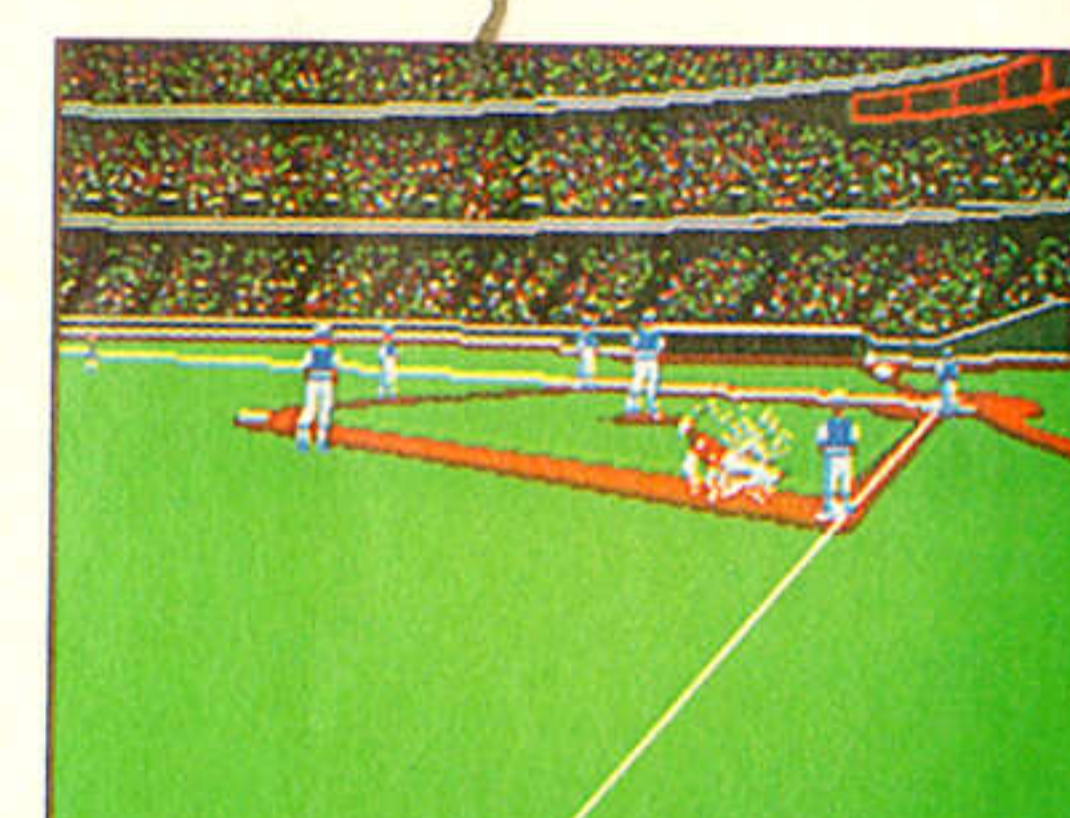
Pick your heat from 23 pitches. Gauge your throw and gun down the runner. Steal second in a cloud of dust. Five different batting options give you all the power of Pete.



Judge the fly, scoop hot grounders, chase down drives at the wall.

YOU'RE IN THE DUGOUT

Set a blistering batting order and pitching rotation. Bring in relievers, pinch-hitters and pinch-runners. Call for the steal or hit-and-run.



It's spikes first when you gotta have the bag — tell 'em Charlie sent ya.

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HOW TO ORDER: Visit your retailer or call 800-227-6900 for Visa/MasterCard orders. Direct price is \$39.95 for the IBM/Tandy version and \$34.95 for the Commodore 64/128 version. A shipping and handling charge of \$4.50 applies to all direct orders. Sales tax will be added to orders in California and Texas.

GAMESTAR

Tandy screens shown. Screens may vary depending on computer system. Gamestar and Pete Rose Pennant Fever are trademarks of Gamestar. Earl Weaver Baseball, Hardball!, IBM, and Tandy are trademarks of Electronic Arts, Accolade, Inc., International Business Machines Corp., and Tandy Corp., respectively.

PETE ROSE PENNANT FEVER.
BASEBALL AT ITS BEST.

Circle Reader Service Number 36.

Fly the Apache to the Attack

It has taken me many hours over a three-day period to begin this written report on **Tomahawk** — because I couldn't stop playing with it! My hat is off to the designer and programmer of **Tomahawk** for making it so challenging, yet satisfying.

Read the instructions carefully, practice the new flying techniques needed, and after the inevitable crashes you'll find yourself improving enough to shoot down enemy copters (and other targets) and even make a safe landing at home base. Not easy, but possible.

This review is of the IBM version of **Tomahawk**, probably the least effective version, and yet it was excellent. The IBM version of **Tomahawk** supports both EGA and CGA, seems very friendly to all the joysticks I tried, and comes on both 5-1/4" and 3-1/2" not-copy-protected diskettes.

Tomahawk Features

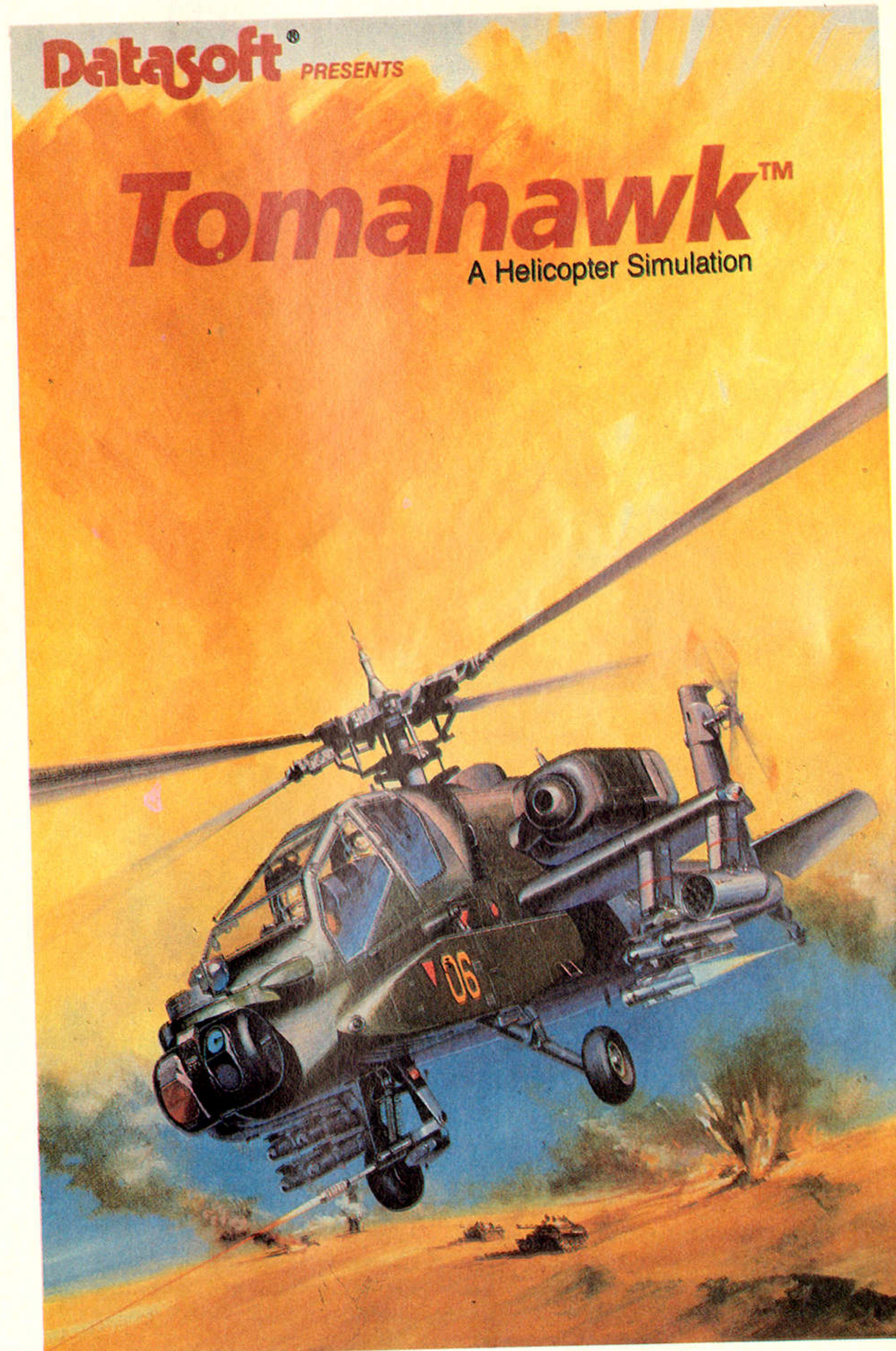
It seems nothing has been left out of this program. You can fly any of four missions, day or night, with or without clouds at five different heights, and with or without crosswinds and turbulence. Levels of difficulty (and danger of being shot down) are Trainee, Squadron Leader, Instructor or Ace. Sound (which I found very good) can be on or off. Keyboard or joystick control is permitted. Your weapons consist of a 30mm cannon with 1200 rounds, 38 unguided rockets and 8 laser-guided auto-tracking missiles. You carry enough fuel for over an hour in the air, depending on use.

A map (available anytime) covers an area of 100 by 200 miles. The map shows your helicopter, enemy helicopters, eight homing beacons and mountains. If you fly out of this area, your **Tomahawk** "wraps around" the screen. In other words, if you fly off the top of the map, you reappear at the bottom, and similarly for left and right sides.

Only one view is available — through the windshield. The daytime 3D magenta terrain you fly over features black buildings, landing pads, transmission pylons, trees, mountains, enemy tanks, field guns, and helicopters, all of which you can crash into if you're not careful. The sky is cyan. At night the sky and ground are black, with magenta targets and ground features. When you're in or above clouds, the view through the windshield is totally white.

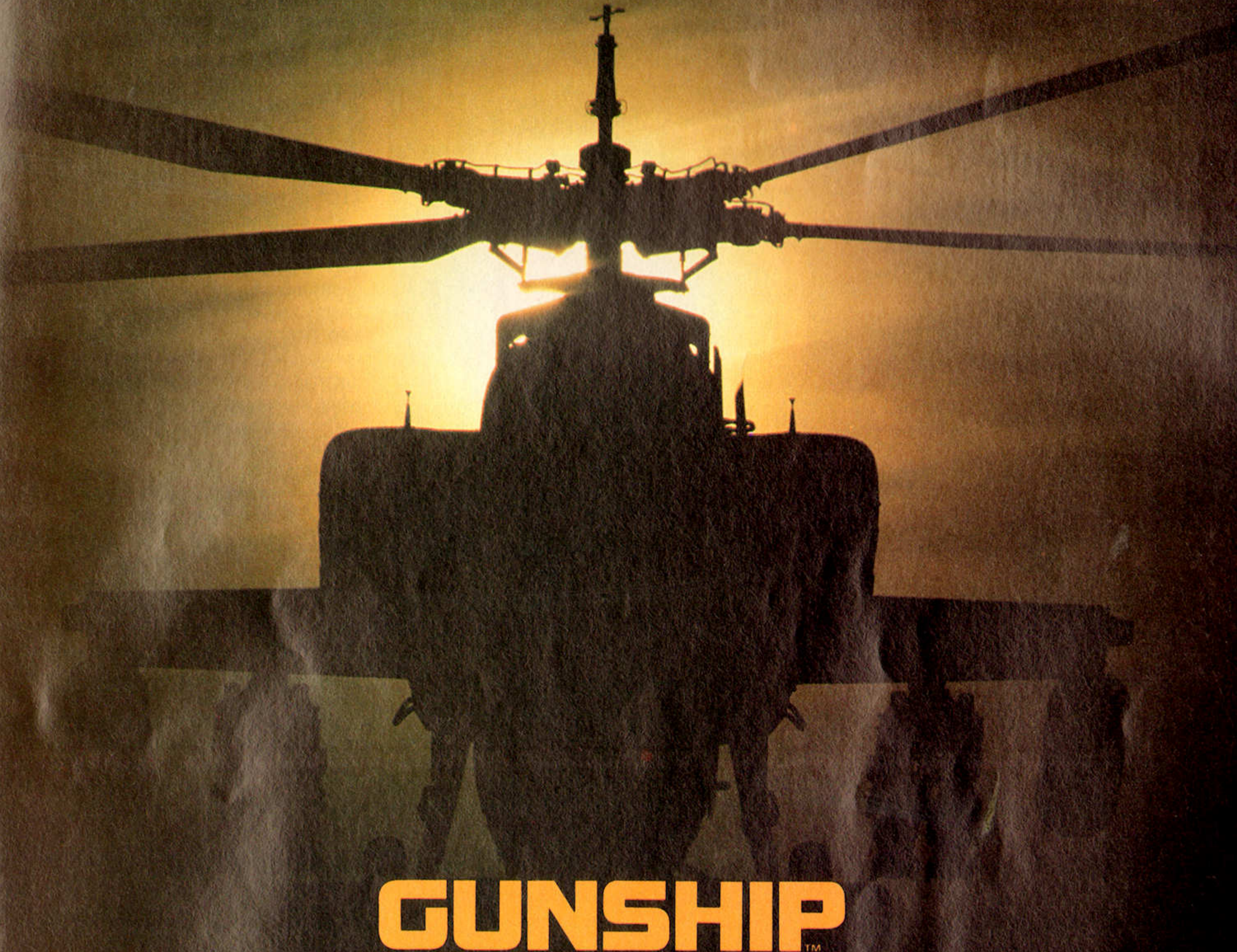
Only line graphics are used, not solid. For example, a mountain looks like a big pyramid with four wide legs. I found this out by trying to fly through what I thought was a big tower but suddenly my windshield shattered and the program informed me I had flown into a mountain! After that I learned to maneuver between trees and mountains, although it's obviously much easier to just fly over them.

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"... a remarkable piece of simulation software."

(PC Week, December 1987)



GUNSHIP simulates the U.S. Army's AH-64A Apache attack helicopter — a devastating, high-speed, tree-skimming, armored warrior. It's the most sophisticated chopper on today's electronic battlefield.

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"... magnificent and entertaining game ..."

(Computer Shopper, March 1988)

"... setting new standards for all the helicopter simulations ..."

(COMPUTE!'S PC Magazine, May 1988)

"... Gunship is a pulse-pounding experience ..."

(Family Computing, June 1987)

For IBM-PC/XT/AT/PS2/TANDY/compatibles, C-64 and Atari ST. PC version supports EGA, CGA and Hercules graphics.

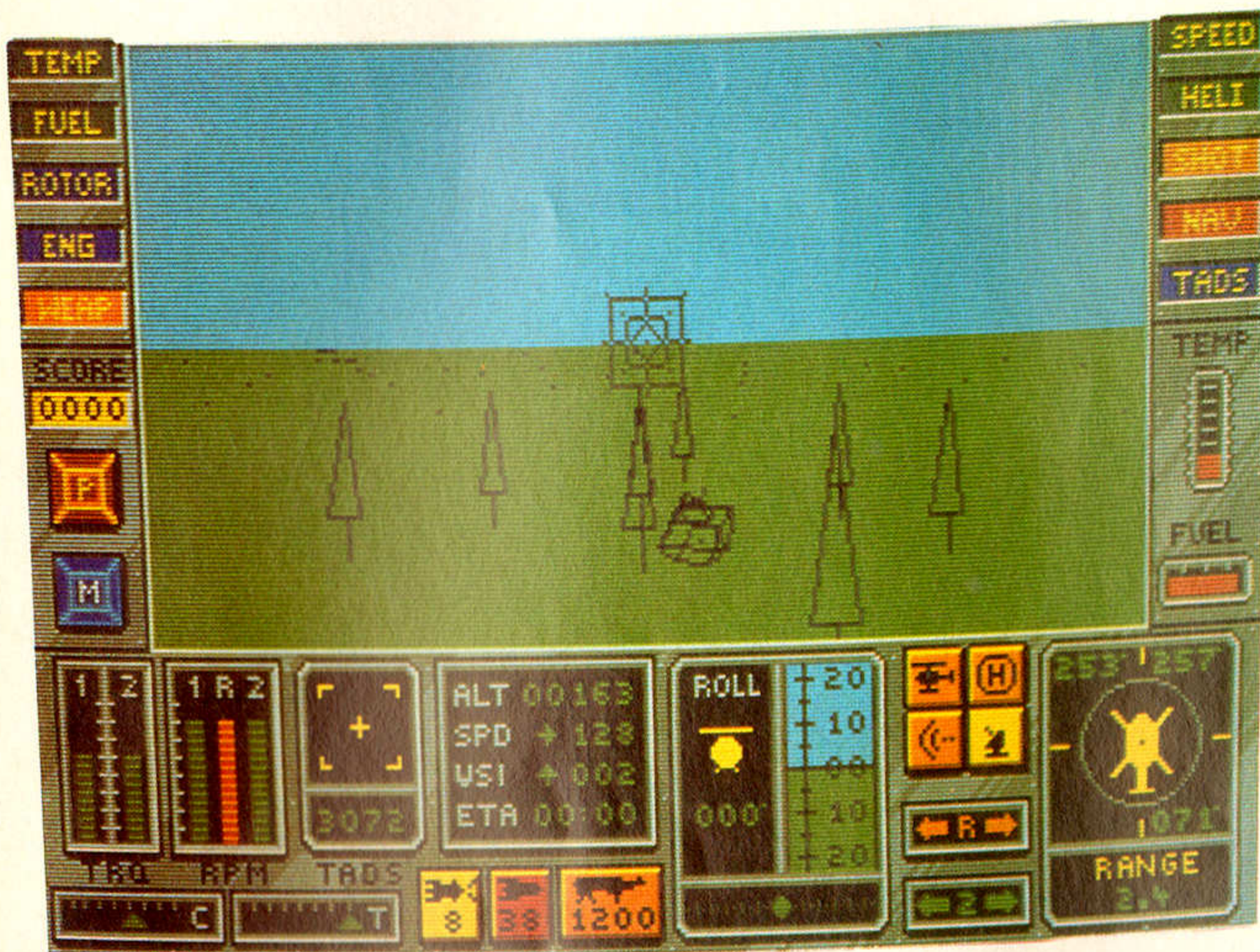
Can't find **GUNSHIP**? Call (301) 771-1151, weekdays 8am to 5pm EST and order by MC/VISA; or mail check/money order for \$54.95 for IBM-PC/Tandy (specify disk size) and Atari ST versions, \$39.95 for C-64 version. U.S. funds only. MD residents add 5% sales tax. Free shipping in U.S.; \$5.00 international. Allow 1-3 weeks for U.S. delivery.



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Documentation

Don't even think about flying Tomahawk until you've thoroughly read the excellent "Pilot's Handbook" and the 4-page "Quick-Reference Guide For IBM Computers." The Handbook only covers the instructions for the Atari and Commodore versions, and many things are different on the IBM.

An indication of the complexity of Tomahawk is that the specific instructions for getting off the ground and flying Tomahawk start on Page 11 of the 17-page Handbook. You'll find yourself referring to the Handbook a lot until you get used to the program, then very little. In other words, you'll need to go through a few read/practice cycles — but it's worth it. When you start understanding how to control Tomahawk you'll have a real blast with it.

Flying Tomahawk

Your Tomahawk comes with a sharp, clear, complete instrument panel that even allows you to fly "blind" if you're in the clouds. Between the panel and the map you can tell where you are, where you're going, where your targets are, your speed, altitude, roll and pitch attitude, armament status and a host of other information. This is probably the most readable and informative instrument panel of any of the simulators I've tested so far.

I've never piloted a helicopter. I've flown in them, but never really paid any attention to the controls. I had always heard helicopters were

mean machines to fly, and now I know why.

In a fixed-wing aircraft you have a joystick for both pitch and roll, rudders for nose direction and balanced flight in a turn, and a throttle to control the engine. A helicopter has different controls. There is a throttle for engine power, a collective control for main rotor pitch (thrust), a cyclic control for tilting the main rotor plane (for flight direction), and a rudder to adjust tail rotor pitch (for nose direction). Each of these interact with the other, so the pilot is pretty busy.

Tomahawk simulates the U.S. Army's AH-64A Apache Advanced Attack Helicopter. To simplify handling, Tomahawk adjusts some control functions automatically, so you are not quite as busy as flying the real thing, but you still have to be mighty careful to keep from crashing.

Once you set the throttle and collective settings with the keyboard, you control direction and speed with the joystick (or cursor keys). Tilt forward and you pitch down and increase speed. Tilt back and you pitch up and decrease speed, and you can even go backwards. Tilt left or right to turn. But watch your vertical motion, which is controlled by both the joystick and the keyboard collective keys (and, to some extent, the keyboard throttle keys.)

Two very important instrument readings are horizontal and vertical speed. These change color, with blue for forward and up, and white for backward and down. You must watch these very carefully or you will certainly crash. With a little practice you'll be able to hover. With

more practice you'll be able to land safely (no more than a vertical speed of 12 feet per minute, maximum of 60 mph forward speed, within a friendly landing pad area) and will immediately be refueled and rearmed. Landing safely in windy and turbulent weather takes a LOT of practice!

The program is very realistic in many ways. Night flying is a bit more challenging than daytime, and you'll need to watch your instruments more than in clear weather. When in the clouds you are totally on instruments. You'll also find yourself checking the map frequently, but don't dwell too long, since your flight is not paused. I flew into some trees while looking at the map!

The program was very tolerant of different joysticks, even though a calibration command (pressing the J keyboard key) didn't seem to do anything. All the joysticks were very sensitive, and some users not used to a joystick might be more comfortable with the keyboard cursor keys, which worked very well.

The instrument panel includes a very effective targeting radar, range counter, and a means of selecting different targets. Finding and destroying targets takes some practice, especially when some of your instruments are destroyed by enemy fire. As you get within about 3000 feet of a target it starts growing in size, and at 1000 feet is fully defined.

Tomahawk is an absolutely terrific program if you'll take a few hours of intense practice to overcome the initial confusion.

Name: Tomahawk
(Trademark of Digital Integration Ltd.)
Type: Helicopter Simulator
Formats: IBM PC/XT/AT; Commodore 64/128; Apple; Atari 8-bit
Publisher: Datasoft
Distributed by: Electronic Arts
Designers: Dave Marshall & Marcus Goodey
Ages: 10 to adult
Requirements: CGA/EGA, 256K RAM, 5-1/4" or 3-1/2" disk drive
Players: One
Prices: \$39.95 for IBM and Apple IIgs versions;
\$29.95 for Commodore, other Apple II and Atari 8-bit

Ability Level:	Beginner-Advanced
Packaging:	Average (5)
Documentation:	Very Good (7)
Graphics:	Very Good (8)
Realism:	Excellent (9)
Playability:	Excellent (9)

CP Rating: 8.11

Circle Reader Service Number 16.

Fight it Out in a Jet

JET puts you at the controls of either an Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon or a Navy carrier-based F-18 Hornet. Both of these fighter aircraft provide fast, accurate, high performance response to your control input. If you like arcade-type action, you'll love JET.

You can fly in a non-combat free-flight mode to practice aerobatics and view scenery from all over the world. For hair-raising action and a real challenge to your flight and judgment skills, you can get into aerial dogfights with Russian MiG-21 and MiG-23 fighters using your 20mm cannon and Sidewinder or Sparrow air-to-air missiles. If you want to go after ground and sea targets, you can arm yourself with Maverick air-to-ground missiles or "smart" bombs.

Both aircraft simulations use a full-screen Heads Up Display (HUD) for monitoring instrument readings. The left side is a vertical bar showing speed, with a vertical bar on the right side showing altitude. Miscellaneous readings and status conditions are shown along a single line at the bottom of the display. The rest of the screen is your view — front, back, left, right or up. Oddly, there is no view down unless you roll on your back and look up!

Although you normally view the outside

world from the cockpit, JET also allows you, at any time, to look at your plane as if you were in the control tower or on the carrier bridge! Furthermore, you can zoom in closer for a better look, just as if you had powerful zoom binoculars. This feature can be used for practice by radio-controlled model airplane hobbyists, since the plane image responds as you operate the controls exactly as if you were flying by remote control.

Standard equipment also includes radar, an automatic on-board target tracking/sequencing computer, and a fully functioning ejection seat.

Version 2.0

JET has its roots with the release in 1979 of the original Flight Simulator. Written by Bruce Artwick of subLOGIC, Flight Simulator was a big hit. Although the Cessna aircraft was slow and sluggish, and not very exciting, it was a great training tool for flight and cross-country navigation, and even instrument flying practice. No guns, no combat, no real action. The most excitement was trying to make a decent landing.

Artwick followed with Flight Simulator II (now available from subLOGIC for Apple II, Commodore 64/128, Atari 800/XL/XE, Atari ST and Amiga, with only the IBM version dis-

tributed by Microsoft), and the new Microsoft IBM Flight Simulator Version 3.0.

Many Flight Simulator users, however, wanted more action. Why not simulate a fighter aircraft, with dogfights and target strikes? Artwick and Charles Guy responded to these requests by releasing the original JET in late 1985, sold by subLOGIC for the IBM PC, Apple II and Commodore 64/128. This has now been updated for the IBM PC to Version 2.0, with H. Feugen also credited.

The original version was pretty powerful, but Version 2.0 has added a lot of features. For one thing, copy protection has been removed, so all files may now be loaded onto a hard disk. JET now runs with many other programs or drivers loaded, and even works with the IBM PS/2 micro channel computers.

EGA displays and a mouse are supported. Zoom capability has been significantly increased. New menus are more readable and consistent and there are more selections. A great feature is a continuously repeating demonstration program.

Documentation

I always like to read through the demon-

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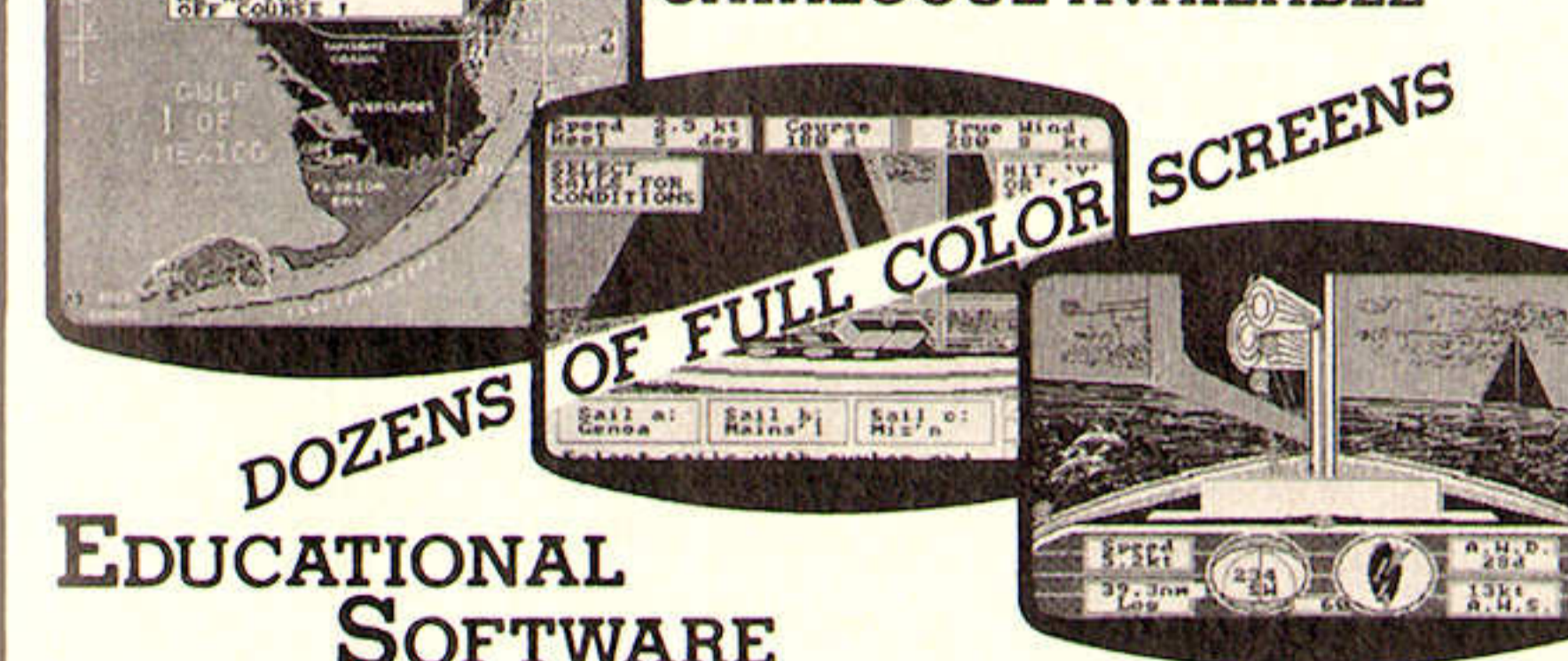
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IBM screens shown.



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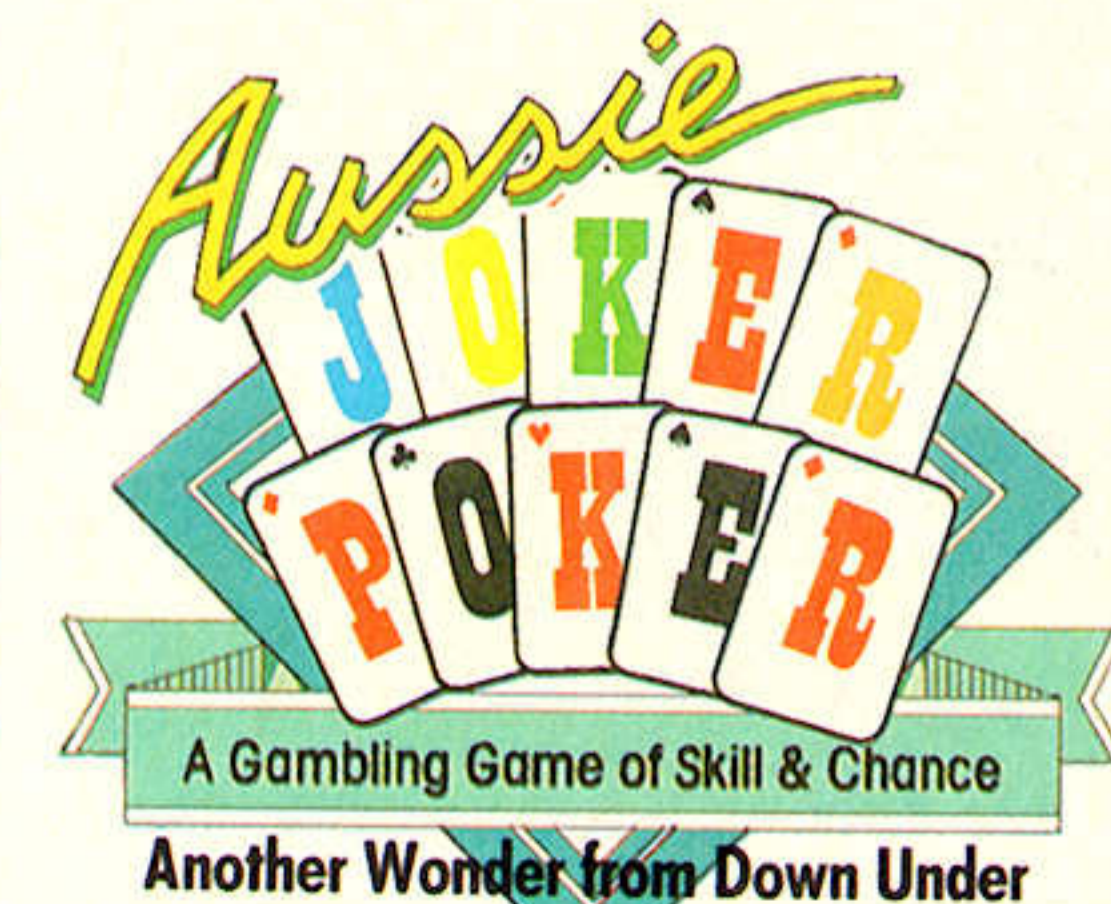
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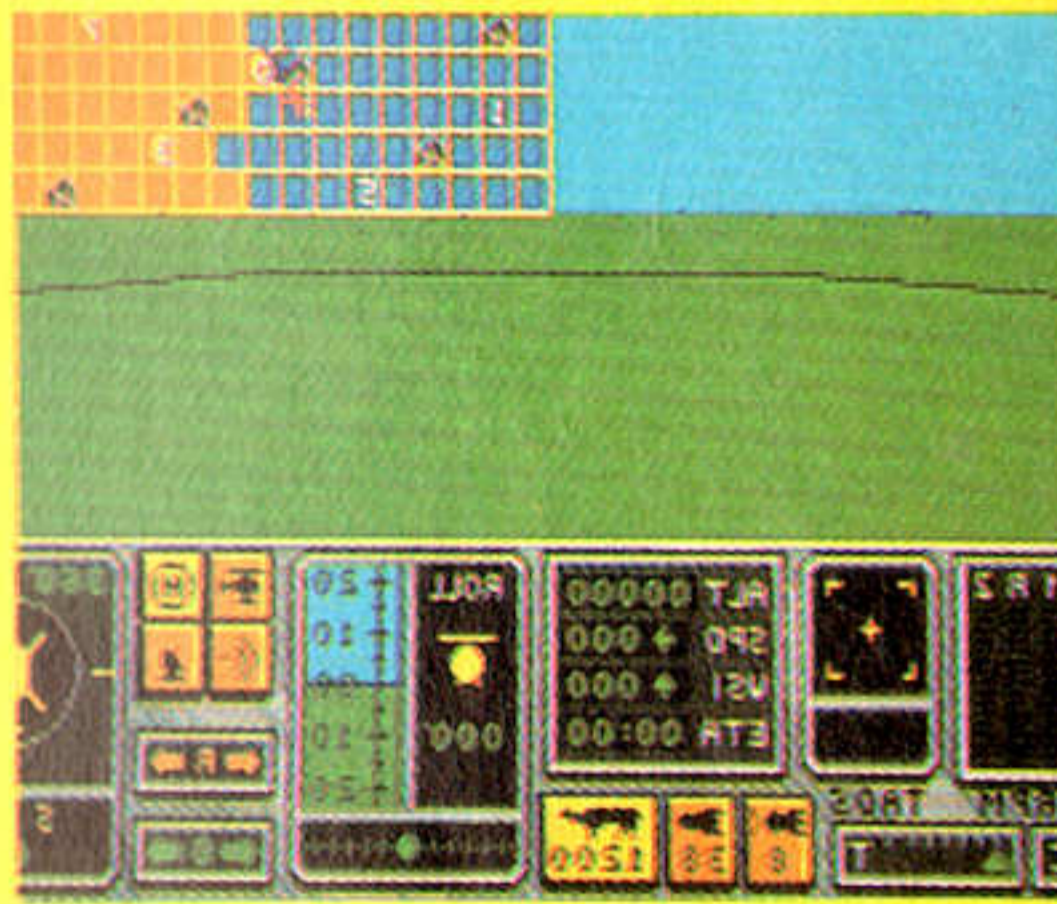
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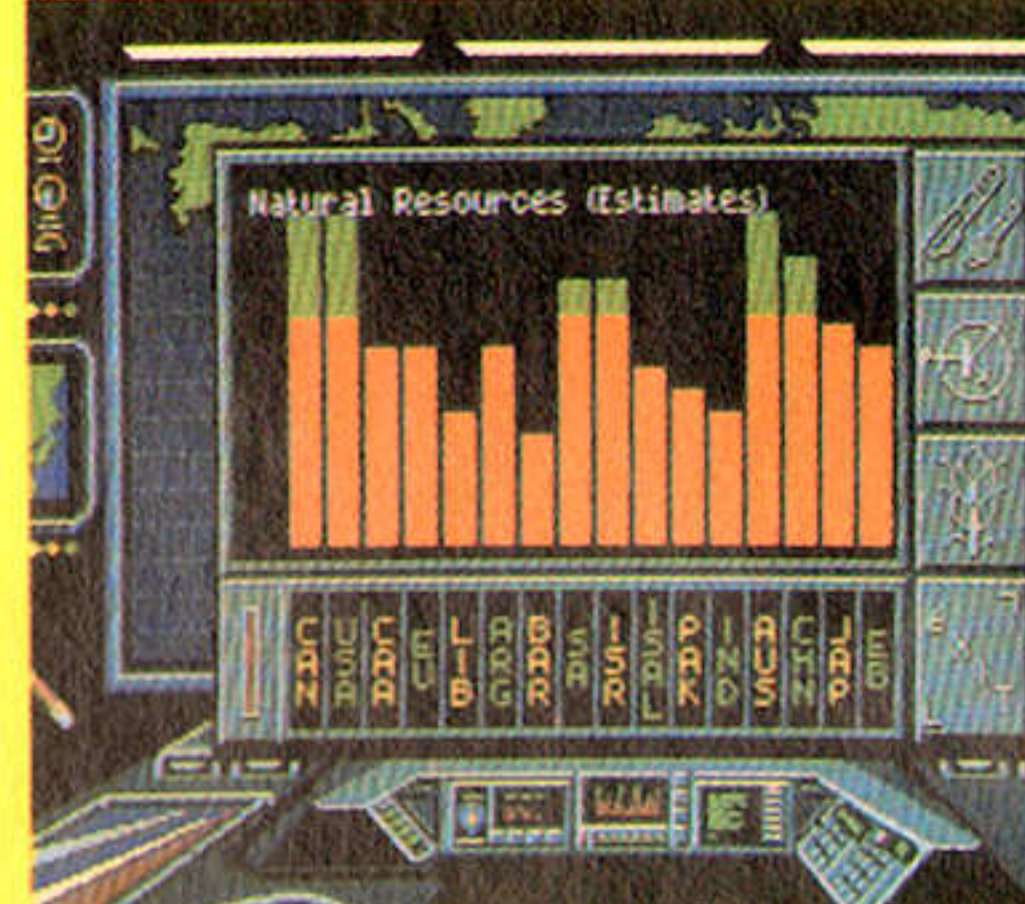
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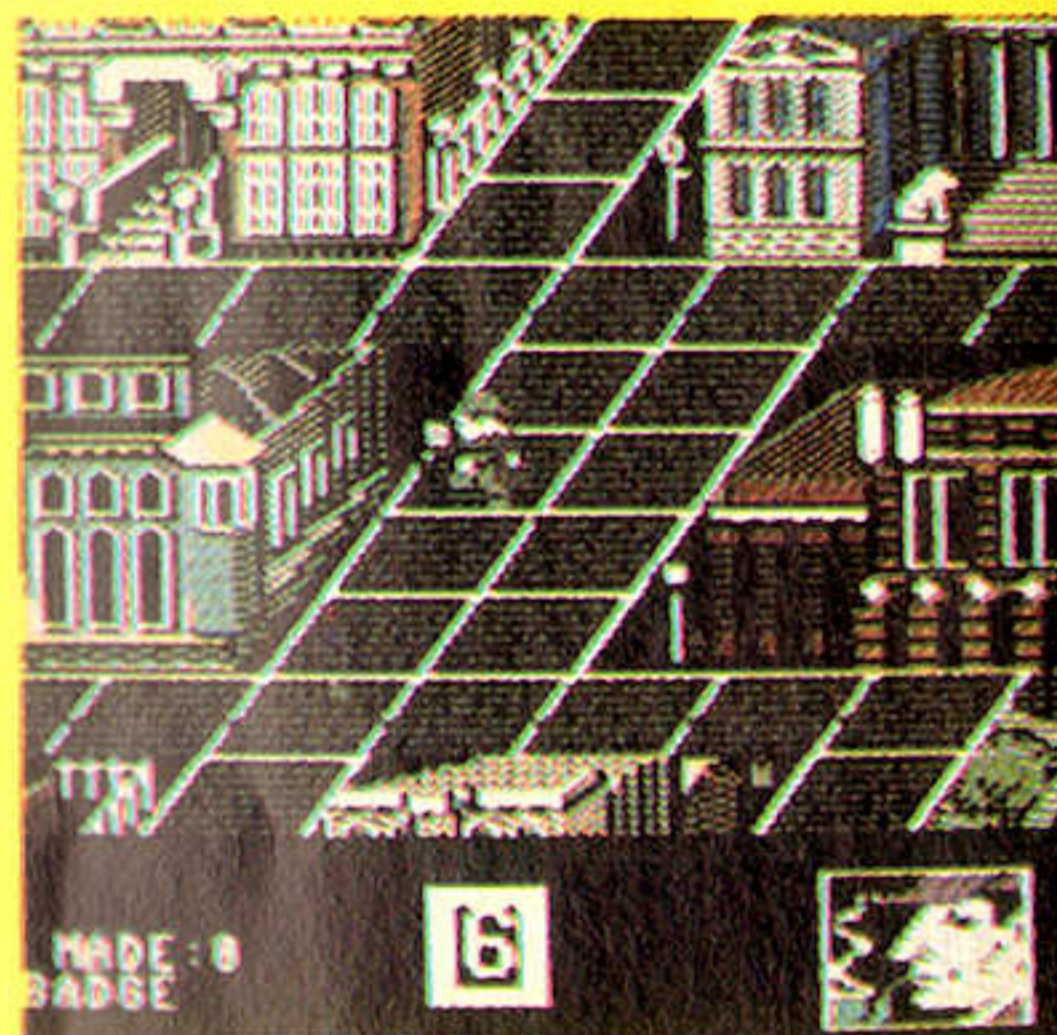


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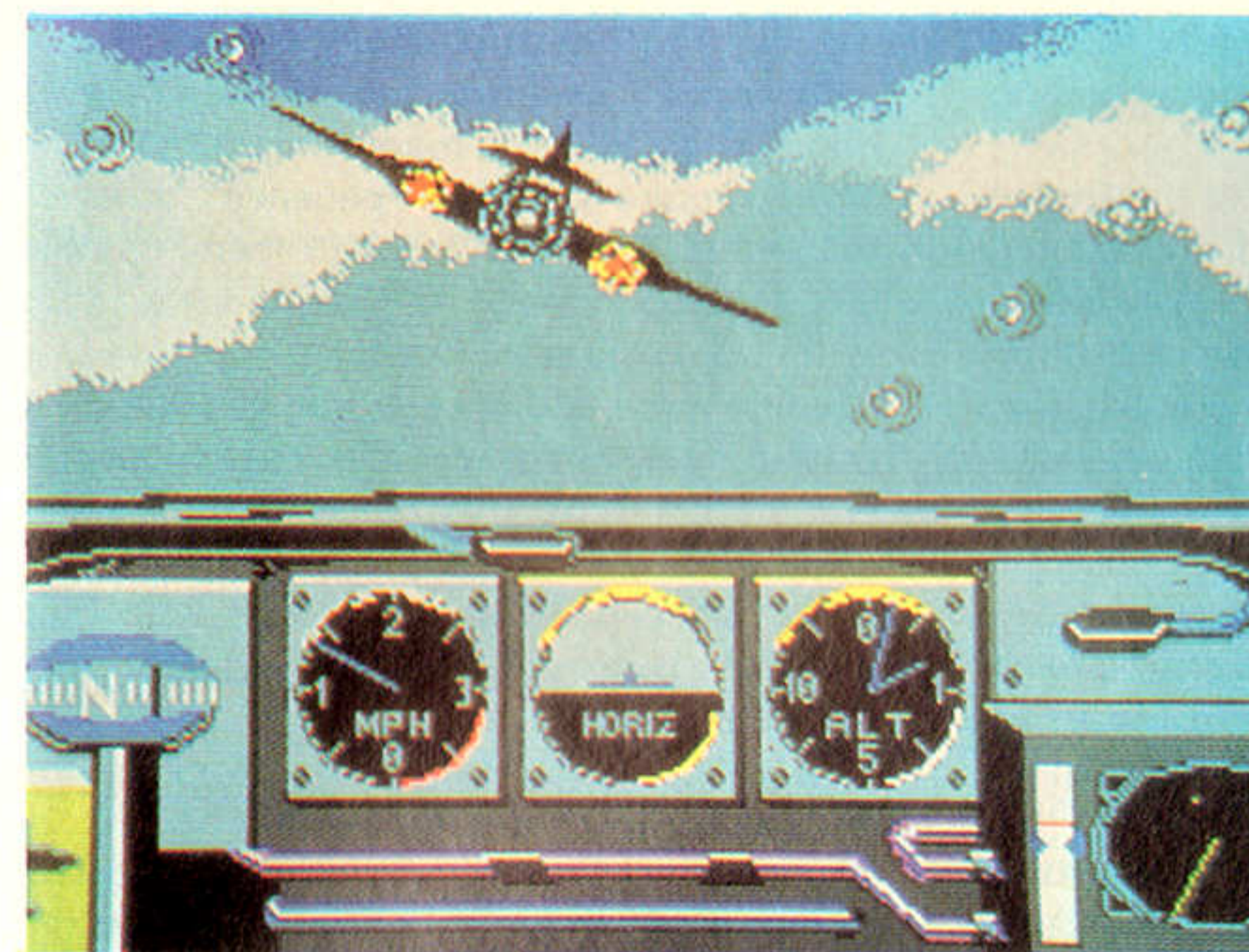
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The result is powerful, confusing, habit-forming and frustrating all at the same time. It borders on being great, but falls short badly in some areas. The graphics, including Hercules monochrome, are excellent, and the sound is better than most other simulators. There are some very clever and unique features. The realism and playability, however, suffer from two basic problems: lack of joystick control and limited maneuverability.

Ace of Aces puts you airborne (no takeoff) in the cockpit of a Royal Air Force (RAF) World War II De Havilland plywood Mosquito fighter/bomber. Your missions include downing Nazi fighters and bombers, sinking U-Boats, outrunning V-1 Buzz Bombs, and stopping enemy trains. You must choose your weapons and fuel wisely, since there's no going back until the mission is completed. You must down any enemy fighters that attack you before you can proceed on your mission, and you can get shot down or run out of ammunition or fuel.

To become an **Ace of Aces** you must complete all missions successfully. Considering the various hazards and difficulties involved, I have to wonder if this is really possible. After about five hours of play, I was not able to complete a single mission.

Documentation

The small 5" x 8" 16-page booklet is well illustrated, and easy to read. Although it is complete, it makes things sound a whole lot easier than they are to accomplish.

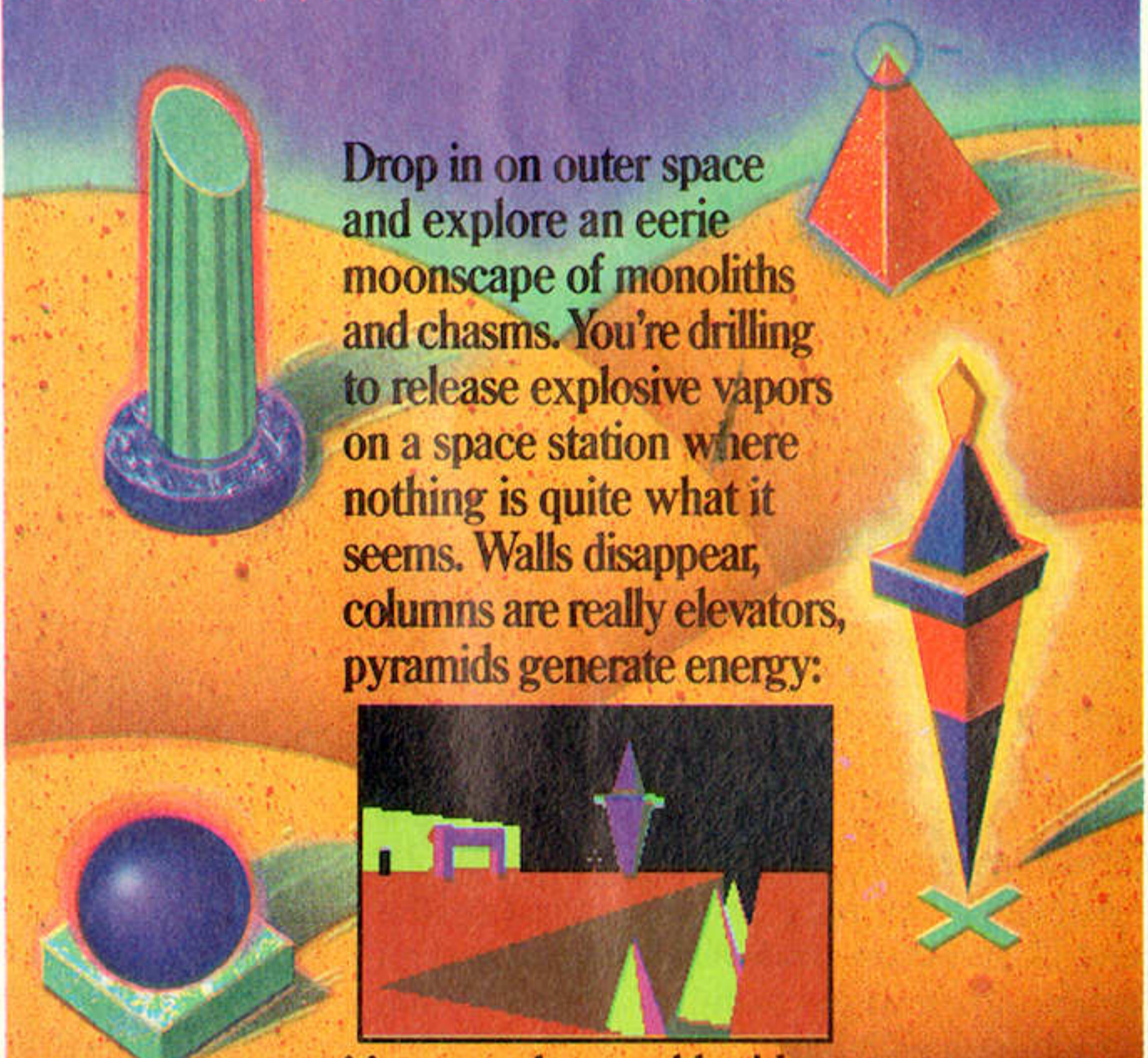
Getting Airborne

The frustration started, for me at least, from the long delays in getting this program started. The program disk is copy protected, so it must be used in a floppy drive. Using a standard-speed IBM PC/XT it took 15 seconds to see the introductory screen, then about 12 seconds more for the actual program to start loading, and another 8 seconds for that to be completed. Next you select Joystick or Keyboard, then select Practice or Mission, then select Dogfight, Train or U-Boat.

52 ►

THE MASTERS COLLECTION

FOR THOSE WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE THE WORLD... BUT DIDN'T SPECIFY WHICH ONE.



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Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64/128, IBM & compatibles.
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EPYX
Circle Reader Service Number 33

Now the disk starts again and the screen spends about 15 seconds showing a series of five "snapshots" (warning siren, running feet, engine starting, removing wheel chocks, pilot's thumbs-up) with appropriate sound. Next the program loads a screen that cycles through the various credits mentioned above and finally (a few seconds less than two minutes from typing ACE at the DOS prompt), you are flying!

This is nice the first time, but annoying to go through this sequence every time. You can interrupt a game with F1 and it goes back to the first selection screen, and proceeds from there. I found that some time could be saved by hitting the Enter key at various places to bypass some of the displays, but the minimum time to go from ACE to action was 50 seconds, and from F1 to action was 30 seconds. There should really be a way to bypass all the non-selection screens.

On the plus side, the graphics are very well done. If you have a CGA color monitor the colors are magenta, cyan, black and white. This is one of the only flight simulator programs I've tried that shows up very well on a Hercules display; most are from bad to unusable. ACE H is the DOS command to access the Hercules board. ACE by itself goes to CGA. If you have both a Hercules and CGA board, as I do, you need to type MODE CO80 at DOS (with MODE.COM on your default drive) to address your CGA board and monitor.

Flying the Mosquito

The Mosquito is a twin-engine high-performance fighter-bomber, but Ace of Aces excessively limits the maneuverability. You can only roll about 35 degrees in either direction, pitch up about 20 degrees, and pitch down about 10 degrees. Acrobatics of any kind are not available.

Although the program responded to the joystick selection, and allowed a calibration routine, there was virtually no control during the program with any of my three joysticks. I found I had to "cheat" during calibration, by hardly moving the joystick from the center position, to get any joystick action at all. After an hour of more of trying to shoot down enemy planes using various joysticks and calibration cheating, I went to using the keyboard and almost immediately shot down three enemy planes!

You can get different views (windshield, left, right, navigator map, bomb bay) at any time with the numeric keys. The windshield front view uses cumulus clouds for your horizon—a nice touch, since it makes it easy to tell when you're turning.

Your instruments and controls include a

compass, radar, intercom, airspeed, altitude, artificial horizon, trim, landing gear, fuel and flaps, plus throttle, prop pitch control and fire extinguishers for each engine.

The navigator's view is a map of the English Channel and parts of England and France. Your plane is shown as well as enemy bombers, submarines, trains, V-1 buzz bombs, bases, and even storm clouds. This map shows the information in a printed Intelligence Report you are given before each mission. Also, before going on a mission you choose the number and types of weapons — bombs, cannon, rockets — and fuel load for that mission.

Enemy aircraft are encountered at every mission, and they are very aggressive. You can see and hear their guns blazing when they fire at you, and your compass, altimeter, radar, trim, flaps, engines and guns are all subject to damage. Function Key F7 lets you see your status any time, including your score for victories. Using the side views you can see when your engine is on fire, and when the engine is dead with the propeller stopped.

When you see three holes suddenly appear in your windshield, you've had it. In the case of V-1 buzz bombs, easily identified by their odd appearance with the jet engine on top, you are in no danger unless you collide with them. They are passive and relatively easy to shoot down.

I could go on and on with a description of this program. It's amazing how much they have packed into the various scenarios. I just wish they had made the plane more acrobatic, usable with a joystick, and less likely to be shot down. I hate losing, and I just couldn't seem to win with Ace of Aces - even though it was lots of fun trying!

Name: ACE of ACES
Type: Fighter/Bomber Simulator
Formats: IBM PC/XT/AT; Commodore 64/128; Atari 400/800
Publisher: Accolade, Inc.
Designer: Stuart Easterbrook
Ages: 12 to adult
Requirements: CGA: 256K RAM, 5-1/4" 360K drive(EGA: 384K RAM, 3-1/2 or 5-1/4" also available)
Players: One
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate-Advanced
Packaging: Average (6)
Documentation: Very Good (7)
Graphics: Excellent (9)
Realism: Very Good (8)
Playability: Very Good (7)

CP Rating: 7.26

Circle Reader Service Number 15.

Summary

Any one of these simulators, given time and effort, will afford you many hours of pleasure. Some require a higher "patience" threshold than others as you go through seemingly endless start-up screens and procedures. Some seem impossible to ever learn to control. All become more addictive as you get better and crash (or get shot down) less. But you must be prepared for the frustration until you gain some competence with the particular program. While previous experience with other programs is some help, each program offers many new challenges.

In case these flight simulators are not enough for you, here is a list of others I know about, some of which I've already reviewed for Computer Play, and some to be reviewed in future months:

Acrojet: Commodore (MicroProse)
AIRSIM-3: Apple II (Mind Systems)
Apollo 18: Commodore/IBM (Accolade)
Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer: IBM (Electronic Arts)
Dam Busters: Apple II/IBM (Accolade)
FALCON: IBM/Macintosh (Spectrum Holobyte)
F-15 Strike Eagle: Apple/Atari/Commodore/IBM (MicroProse)
GeeBee Air Rally: Commodore (Activision)
Harrier Combat Simulator: Amiga/Atari ST/Commodore/IBM (Mindscape)
Harrier Strike Mission II: IBM/Macintosh (Miles Computing)
Helicopter Simulator: Apple IIGS/Atari ST/IBM (Sierra)
Hellcat Ace: IBM (MicroProse)
Lock-On: Commodore/IBM (Data East USA)
Power At Sea: Commodore (Accolade)
Project Stealth Fighter: Commodore/IBM (MicroProse)
Skyfox: Apple IIe/Macintosh (Electronic Arts)
Solo Flight: Apple II/Atari 8-bit/Commodore/IBM (MicroProse)
Space Shuttle: Apple II (Activision)
Spitfire Ace: Atari 8-bit/Commodore/IBM (MicroProse)
Spitfire Simulator: Apple II (Mind Systems)
Stealth: Commodore (subLOGIC)
Top Gun: IBM (Thunder Mountain)
Top Gunner Collection: Atari 8-bit/Commodore (MicroProse)
Tranquility Base: Apple II (EDUWare Services)

The COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD

One of the unique features of our magazine is the patented COMPUTER PLAY Scorecard. In order for you to be able to utilize it fully, we will explain the definitions of the various categories and give details on the final CP RATING.

NAME: This is the specific name found on the game package.

TYPE: We will attempt to specify the category of game being reviewed. Choices include ARCADE, ADVENTURE, TEXT, SIMULATION, TRADITIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, CREATIVITY, STRATEGY, and CARTRIDGE.

FORMATS: The currently available formats will be listed. Normally, we will also note the version of the game that was used for the review.

PUBLISHER: The company which created the game.

DISTRIBUTOR: The company that actually sells the game.

DESIGNERS: The individuals who designed the game.

AGES: The suggested age range for which the game is appropriate.

OF PLAYERS: The number of players who can play at one time.

*** THE RATINGS ***

ABILITY LEVEL: Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. Our reviewers are instructed to rate this from the viewpoint of the average gamer.

REQUIREMENTS: Specific hardware or memory requirements beyond the minimum computer system for a specific format.

PRICE: The manufacturer's suggested retail price.

PACKAGING: Are the materials slick and colorful? Does the package look professional? Are "bonus" items provided to enhance the game experience?

DOCUMENTATION: Are the instructions clear and understandable? Are all game situations covered? Are all necessary player aids or maps provided?

GRAPHICS/TEXT: Are the screen graphics clean and colorful? Do they add to the game? Do the graphics take full advantage of the machine's capabilities? For text games, was the story exciting and imaginative? This category includes sound and animation.

REALISM: This category is for vehicle simulations, war games, and traditional games (such as chess). Does the game faithfully recreate the "look and feel" of the events being simulated? Are the statistics or historical facts correct? Did the game give you a true experience?

PLAYABILITY: The big one. Did the game hold your interest? Did you play for hours or get bored quickly? Did the game draw you into another world? Would you immediately want to show the game to a friend? Did the game break new ground in design? Did you want to play it again the next day?

Despite the fact that there are five categories in the rating process, you will note that a game will never get a truly good rating without getting a good score for playability.

THE NUMBERS

As you will note when reading a SCORECARD, each reviewer rates the game in each category and assigns a text and numerical rating.

A formula is then applied to the various ratings in order to reach the final CP RATING, the reviewer's overall rating of the game.

The percentages for each category are: PACKAGING — 10%, DOCUMENTATION — 15%, GRAPHICS/TEXT — 25%, REALISM — 25%, and PLAYABILITY — 50%.

Yes, the percentages add up to 125%. This is because some games can only be rated for GRAPHICS but not for REALISM (such as PAC-MAN). Others can be rated for both but one category is more important than another. In these cases the 25% is split. FLIGHT SIMULATOR might be rated 10% for GRAPHICS and 15% for REALISM.

The breakdown in percentages to each category is subjective but represents our best efforts to assign a single rating for every game. We feel that every category is important. The game may be great but cheap packaging may detract from the overall value.

READER INPUT

We give you the ratings for each category. If your own desires are different than ours then you can still work out your own formula. Perhaps you are totally uninterested in packaging. Then you can simply focus on the other category ratings.

YOU CAN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WITHOUT A...

The actual space taken up by the scorecards is small but they are an essential part of this magazine. The credibility of our reviewers and the magazine itself rides on the scorecards. We want a casual reader to be able to quickly spot the winners and losers each month. We welcome suggestions on how this process can be improved and standardized. Each issue will contain a summary of all ratings from previous issues.

GAME RATING SUMMARY

NAME	PUBLISHER	RATING
Dungeon Master	FTL Games	9.65
Solitaire Royale	Spectrum HoloByte	9.50
ULTIMA V	Origin Systems	9.25
Bard's Tale III	Interplay Products	9.25
Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	9.15
Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?	Broderbund	9.10
Zak McKracken/Alien Mindbenders	Lucasfilm Games	8.90
TV Football	Cinemaware	8.90
PHM Pegasus	Lucasfilm Games	8.85
The Three Stooges	Cinemaware	8.75
GFL Football	Gamestar/Mediasoft	8.72
Hellcat Ace	Microprose	8.60
Death Sword	Palace/Epyx	8.60
GBA Basketball	Gamestar/Mediasoft	8.52
The Games: Winter Edition	Epyx	8.50
Police Quest	Sierra On-Line	8.50
Decisive Battles of the Civil War	SSG	8.40
Shadowgate	Mindscape	8.40
Super Sunday	Avalon Hill	8.40
Jam Session	Broderbund	8.35
Falcon F-16	Spectrum HoloByte	8.30
Project Stealth Fighter	Microprose	8.25
Pete Rose Pennant Fever	Gamestar/Mediasoft	8.00
Hardball!	Accolade	7.78
Sons of Liberty	SSI	7.50
John Elway's Quarterback	Melbourne House	7.50
World Class Leader Board Golf	Access	7.40
Sporting News Baseball	Epyx	7.35
Romance of the Three Kingdoms	Koei	7.16
Jinxter	Rainbird	6.75
Kid Niki	Data East	6.75
Hunt for Red October	DataSoft	6.47
NFL Challenge	XOR	6.40
Pro Challenge	XOR	6.24
Ebonstar	MicroIllusions	5.25

VIDEO TITLES

The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo	9.13
RBI Baseball	Tengen	7.68
Contra	Konami	7.63

Go on the Offense with DD

By Rusel DeMaria

There's never a dull moment around the local coin-operated version of **Double Dragon**. Kids of all ages crowd around it and pump in quarters. They play in pairs, fighting the common enemies in the quest to save the girl.

In **Double Dragon**, you must play Billie whose girlfriend has been kidnapped by the evil Shadow Boss of the Black Warriors (in the NINTENDO version, it is actually your own brother, Jimmy, who is the enemy, though in the arcade, he is your ally). Playing the game involves punching, kicking, climbing, jumping, and otherwise battling a seemingly endless assortment of enemy characters while traversing the city streets and infiltrating the evil gang's secret headquarters. This is an action game that demands fast movements and lots of offense.

So, given the immense popularity of this game, it comes as no surprise that the Nintendo version was most eagerly awaited by game players nationwide. And, now that it has been released, the question must be asked: Does it live up to our expectations?

Though it is not entirely fair to compare the NINTENDO cartridge game with the dedicated arcade version, such comparison comes inevitably to mind with such a popular title. So, if you are a fan of the arcade game, you'll be interested in this assessment. Otherwise, you might want to take this comparison lightly. After all, even though the cartridge may fall short in some ways, it is still a fun and challenging game.

Nintendo vs. Coin-op

In some ways, the NINTENDO version fails to live up to my expectations. It is essentially a one-player game. Though you can spar with another player in a special two-player practice mode, the actual game itself can only be played by one person at a time. That is my major disappointment about the game. So much of the coin-op version's appeal is the cooperative

efforts of team play. That aspect is completely missing from the NINTENDO version.

The graphics are not as good, but they are quite appealing. Someone who has never seen the coin-op will be pleased, though comparisons are inevitable. Still, I rate this game high on the scale for graphics.

Now for the play itself. The game is somewhat different. In the cartridge version, you start out with only a few standard fighting techniques. You must earn the more exotic styles like the knee-to-the-face, the reverse elbow, or the spin kick. This differs from the coin-op in that you start out with all the techniques, but the quality of the opposition is also more challenging.

Other major differences have to do with weapons and enemy behavior. Basically, coin-op players may be surprised to find that weapons have a different effectiveness in the Nintendo game. For instance, a whip is more effective in NINTENDO. And enemy behavior is much different. In the coin-op version, enemies give no quarter. They will gang up on you without hesitation, attacking from both sides, picking up any stray weapons, and generally doing their best to devastate you.

In the NINTENDO version, enemies are much less aggressive. For instance, they will rarely attack you more than one at a time—unless you are careless enough to position yourself between two of them. And they are very slow to pick up stray weapons. Given enough time, they will pick up knives, boxes, clubs, or other implements, but not with the alacrity of their coin-op counterparts. This offers you a distinct advantage since you will almost always be the first to reach a weapon on the ground. Enemies also lose their weapons more easily than they do in the arcades—another advantage.

Playing NINTENDO

There is an unsavory assortment of enemy characters you will meet while playing **Double Dragon**, and you can gain some level of ac-

quaintance with them in the practice mode where you pick one character to fight with. In practice, both characters are the same, so if you pick the whip-wielding Linda, for instance, you will fight as Linda and against Linda. It isn't quite the same as fighting as Billie against Linda.

During the actual game, you must carry out several missions. The first couple of missions are really very easy, though they take some time to complete. But you will soon enough begin to wish you could bypass these early phases and get straight to Mission 3 or Mission 4 which are more challenging. However, unlike many other NINTENDO games, there doesn't seem to be any hidden way to gain advantage in this game (though there are several ways to improve your situation with proper strategy). But the scarcity of secrets to discover is unfortunate since that is one of my favorite aspects of these video games—their wide variety of options.

So far, most of what I've said about **Double Dragon** has not been entirely positive, but it is a pretty good game if taken independently of its arcade origins. It is very challenging at the later stages, and becomes more and more visually appealing as the game progresses. Also, once you have attained sufficient skill to use the more exotic attack techniques, the game becomes more enjoyable (though the enemies and challenges also become more formidable).

I enjoyed playing the game, particularly in the second half, though I didn't enjoy having to start over from the beginning every time I failed later in the game. Though this does prevent you from completing the game too quickly, the early phases of the game quickly become so familiar and unchallenging that I often quit playing rather than endure the same beginnings again. I think if it weren't for that, and if the game could be played by two players as allies, this would be a top-of-the-line game. As it is, it is merely good.

Name: **Double Dragon**

Publisher: **Tradewest**

Ages: **6 to 24**

Players: **up to two players alternating turns**

Requirements: **NES and controller**

Price: **\$44.95**

Ability level: **Easy to start, hard to finish**

Packaging: **Average (7)**

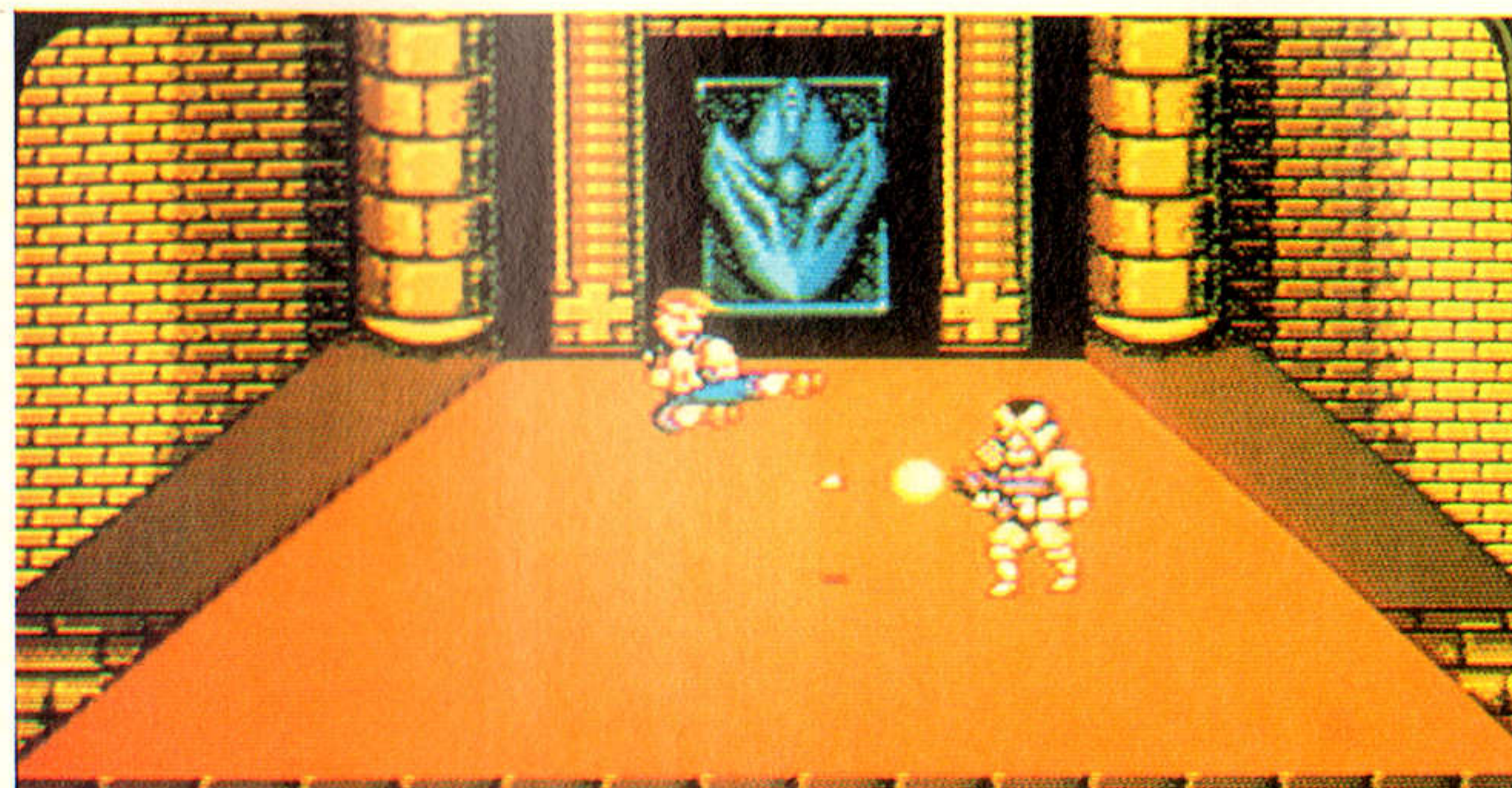
Documentation: **Adequate (6)**

Graphics/Text: **Very Good (8.5)**

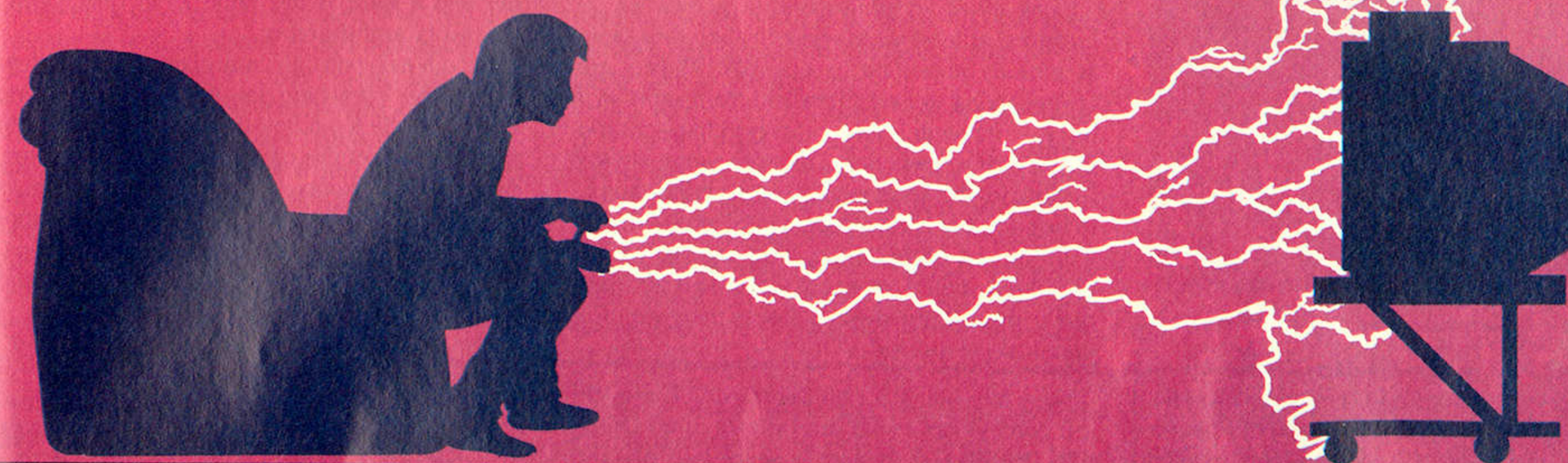
Playability: **Very Good (8.5)**

CP Rating: **7.98**

Circle Reader Service Number 20.



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Channel Three

By Mark DeCarlo

GHOSTBUSTERS (ACTIVISION, one player) is a curious cart indeed. I really wanted to believe that this game was something other than a shameless, opportunistic attempt to cash in on a four year old movie. I figured that since it had been so long since the film came out, this game must really be good. (Maybe they'd been working on the perfect game for four years and have only now completed it). No such luck.

GHOSTBUSTERS is lacking in most of the categories that make up a great video game; originality, graphics, excitement, innovation, realism and pacing.

As far as originality, the game is basically the plot of the movie. You get in your **GHOSTBUSTERS** mobile, drive to the shop and buy supplies, then go out on the street and capture ghosts. The big final phase of the game is when you enter the habitat of Zuul and climb the 22 flights of steps to defeat the main ghost before the Marshmallow man reaches the top of the building. That's it.

The graphics are very limited. Compared to some other new games on the market (Double Dribble, for example) this game looks like Space Invaders circa 1980. The screens are merely average at best. And because of this, the level of excitement never increases. There is a plodding pace to this game that I found very dull. The screens where the **GHOSTBUSTERS** actually try to capture the ghosts simply have no punch or excitement. You don't have to chase the ghosts around or through the buildings or hallways. The Busters set up their traps, wait, then turn on their beams. I'm sure there are added little nuances that players could reach after spending lots of time with this game, but why? I don't think

it has the punch to inspire players to play it more than a few times.

But the most disturbing aspect of the game, to me anyway, was the complete focus on money. Even in the player's guide, the directions are explained like a business plan. You get a loan from a bank and can only function as long as your money lasts. The object of the game is supposed to be saving the city, and world, from total destruction. But the real point is to make money. At it's core, this is an instructional course in capitalism. Catch ghosts — make money! Instead of catch ghosts — save the world.

Most other action/adventure games we've looked at at least try to make final victory seem as morally important as possible. Players are always trying to save the world from some evil force — whether it's the dragon in Super Mario Brothers or some fictional dictator, we're always fighting for the good guys. This is a minor point, to be sure, but it's symptomatic of what's wrong with the rest of this game. Nothing really pans out like it should. Because when you get right down to it, life and death is always more exciting than making money.

Hey, hey but don't be depressed! There still are good video games around, Virginia! **DOUBLE DRIBBLE** (KONAMI, one or two players) proves that point very well.

Some sports games have been developed for the video game market faster than others. Baseball, Tennis, and other individual games like them were easier to configure to the NINTENDO format, and therefore came out first. Team sports like hockey, volleyball and basketball have taken longer because the team interplay aspect of the game was perhaps more difficult to achieve in this format.

Well, KONAMI has cleared this hurdle with

flying colors. The result is truly a team game that has enough flexibility and action built into it to last for many seasons to come.

To start the game, you first must select your opponent. You can either play the computer or a pal. The computer is good, so try and find a friend. You then select duration of quarters, teams and level of play. There are three levels of play from beginner to expert. As you progress in your abilities, you can adjust the game accordingly.

This game is played just like a five to a side, full-court game. Most of the NBA rules apply and what makes the difference between a winner and a loser is the same as in real hoops: teamwork and shooting.

On offense, you can control one flashing player at a time. When you pass the ball off, the game automatically switches the flashing control to the recipient of the pass. The A button passes, the B button shoots. The full range of shots is available from slam-dunks to three point specials. The passing game can be fast and furious, but be careful not to run it out of bounds and loose possession.

On defense you have the same one player-flashing control.

The B button switches control to the defenseman closest to the ball-handler and the the A button blocks and steals.

From there, the rules of basketball prevail. Fouls result in free-throws. An open man in the key results in a dramatic slam-dunk. The player's guide and controller configuration were very well designed and allow you to be playing this game well after your first session.

But what really makes this game so special is that it's not complex. The control of the players is easily understood and mastered, so you spend most of your time perfecting your touch — the shooting and passing game. On defense, you've got to play tough to keep them from running up a big score. The dynamics and feel of this game are truly competitive. When you're in the two player mode, you're really competing against your buddy, and what's going to make the difference in the final score is not some complicated, glitchy game, but your individual skill. And that's what basketball is all about. Swish!

Top Gun, (KONAMI, one player), is about as close to real combat flying as I'd personally like to get. From the cockpit of your F-14 fighter, you're asked to perform a series of missions of increasing difficulty until the land, air and sea has been completely rid of the enemy and once again made safe for democracy.

The only weapons available are your machine guns, air-to-air rockets and your guts. This flight simulator is an exciting version of aerial combat sure to keep your interest for many tours of duty.

Before your flight begins, you're asked to choose the type of rockets you wish to use. Your crack Navy fighter is armed with either 40 HOUND's, 20 WOLF's or 10 TIGER's. The TIGER rockets are the most powerful and have the longest range, but take a couple practice flights

before you use them. The worst thing that can happen to you up there is to be stranded without any more rockets. It's better to start off with 40 rockets and not need them than to have only ten left and need eleven.

Each flight is equipped with unlimited machine gun fire. The machine guns can destroy flying bogeys flying close to your craft. However, the further away the enemy gets, the harder it is to down them with just your machine guns. Start with the HOUND's and then as your aim gets better, you can gradually move up to the more powerful rockets. The TIGER's can down a plane that is four times further away than can a HOUND.

Your mission begins as your F-14 is catapulted off the deck of your carrier. Your plane flies out over the blue Gulf waters as you automatically climb to 10,000 feet for your training mission.

Once you reach cruising altitude and speed, you're presented with a thundering array of bogey's. Some come at you from behind, others approach from the front. Move in and out of cloud banks, around hostile air-fire and away from oncoming enemy rockets as you attempt to keep from losing control of the jet engine strapped to your back.

By Rawson Stovall

I have never seen a submarine except for the ride at Disneyland. You know, the one where you cruise around a little lake looking at weird fish, mermaids, sunken treasure and giant octopuses. The Disney subs don't really ever submerge, but the entire ride is really an extraordinarily convincing special effect. If I ever took a ride on a real sub, even for just 15 minutes or so, I think I would get the willies. That's why I would like to play a good submarine simulation game — to have that feeling without really getting scared.

But I have yet to find a good submarine simulation. DATASOFT'S *The Hunt For Red October* is too hard as is EPYX'S *Sub Battle Simulator*. **Gato**, one of the latest games from ATARI for their XE game system, is just too slow and boring.

The XE version of **Gato** is based on the SPEC-TRUM HOLOBYTE computer game of the same name. However, according to a source at ATARI, the XE version is slightly different from the computer version.

In ATARI's **Gato** for the XE game system and XE/XL computers, the player is assigned a **Gato**-class submarine. These tough little subs were the mainstay of America's World War II submarine fleet. As the player makes his way through the South Pacific, a Morse code message comes through informing him that an enemy destroyer or convoy of supply ships has been spotted off the coast of a very strategic island. It is then his duty to race to the island and destroy the enemy.

The objective in **Gato** is to complete as many missions as possible before having to return to the subtender (supply ship) for repairs, fuel, weapons and supplies. The missions range from

In each game, you're given three planes. There are two ways to loose your plane in the first mission: a head-on collision with an enemy rocket, and dumping your billion dollar fighter in the drink. If you manage to avoid the gun fire and rockets, it's time for the landing sequence.

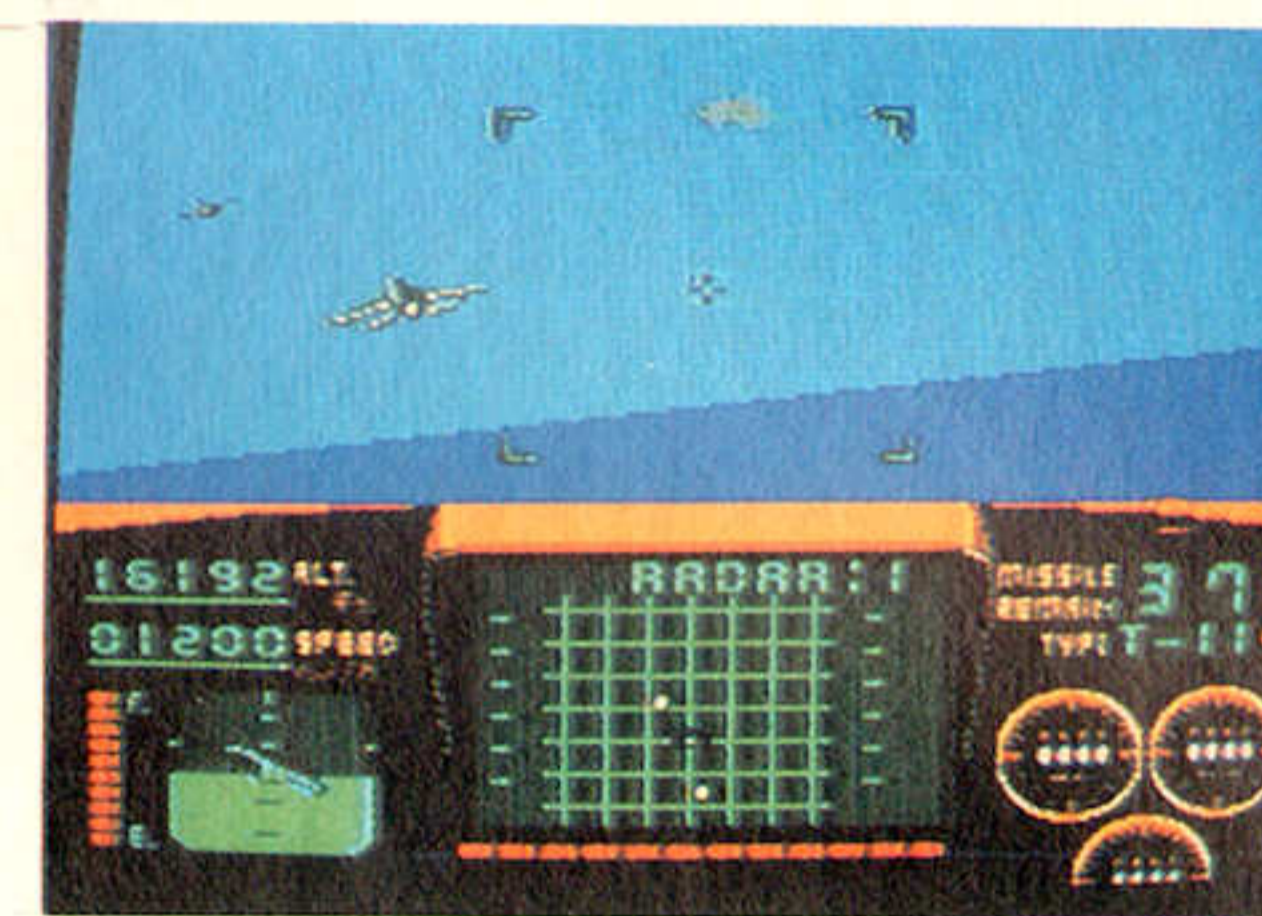
The plane takes you down automatically into the landing sequence. Then, back on manual, you have to guide the plane onto the tiny carrier deck while simultaneously decreasing your speed and maintaining altitude. This landing sequence is not easy to master. If you're even a little bit off, your plane goes skidding into the seas. And that's not the kind of behavior that wins medals.

After you've mastered the training mission, it's time to go out and cause some real damage. Mission Two designates enemy carriers hidden in the Gulf as Priority One.

This time there are more airborne enemies plus ships to sink. In order to sink the ships, you've got to come in low. But when you come in low, the bogeys are all over you. The rush of enemy gun and rocket fire is intense. You've got to dip and run faster and better to get close to the ships. Once you are down low and aimed at a carrier, cut loose your rocket and get the hell out

of there! You don't want to be in the area when that baby goes up.

This is a game that definitely benefits from the use of a joystick and turbo buttons. The radar screen and field of vision displays are well coordinated, creating a real sense of what's going on all around you. This cartridge is so well designed that after a few minutes, you actually forget you're in your living room and come to believe you're sitting in a cramped cockpit somewhere over blue water. Feel the need for some Speed.



Get the enemy in your sights with Top Gun.

infiltrating enemy regions to intercepting enemy craft to cutting off enemy supply lines.

The game uses the keyboard and includes nine different "sub screens" which help the player along on his mission. The game screens are date inquiry, game control parameters, mission assignment, the main control screen, quadrant chart, patrol area chart, radar, damage report and damage control. If the player completes enough missions and sinks enough ships then maybe someday the Navy will make him a Captain. Also, if the player has a disk drive then the game automatically records the "captain's log".

The game includes 10 different levels of difficulty. In levels one through three the enemy ships are shown on the the patrol area and quadrant charts. In levels four through six the enemy vessels are shown on the quadrant chart only. In levels seven through nine the player must decode the Morse code messages himself. A Morse code chart is included with the game.

While surfaced or awash (just the top part of the sub is out the water), the player can view out of the conning tower. The player can choose from forward, aft, port or starboard views. When the sub is under water then the player can use his periscope.

I had so much trouble getting my periscope up that I was totally frustrated. The first time I tried to raise it I was 200 feet below the surface. After reading the instructions once more I realized that the periscope is operational only to a depth of 45 feet. So I tried my periscope at 40 feet, 25 feet, 10 feet and then when I was surfaced. All of those times the XE only "buzzed" at me. My submarine was not damaged. I know that I was doing it right. I had read the instructions over and over again to make sure that I wasn't doing anything wrong.

I tried and tried but the blasted periscope never did give — except once. And why it did that time and not the others I have no idea! And so, for some strange reason, out of an entire evening of cruising the ocean depths I was only able to shoot a ship while I was surfaced.

While the periscope problem may not occur in every XE household, (my XE may just be stubborn) it really affects the game play. Without my periscope I couldn't sneak up on a tanker and send it to the bottom of the ocean with it never seeing me. I had to be surfaced and it totally ruined the element of surprise. If a patrol boat saw me, then he would start shooting at me and my days would be numbered. Not having a periscope really messed up the play of the game.

Upon reflection, I realized that even had my periscope worked, I still wouldn't have enjoyed the game very much. **Gato** is very repetitious. Not having a periscope just caused me to turn the game off sooner.

Overall, **Gato** is fairly entertaining and challenging for the first two hours, even though the sound and graphics aren't anything special. After that, though, it suddenly dawned on me that I was yawning more than I was playing. For all intents and purposes, the game over the long haul is just too slow and boring. I kept thinking, "After you've sunk one ship, you've sunk them all". I haven't played all of ATARI's games for this system, but if **Gato** is typical, they need to do better to compete with NINTENDO and SEGA in the home game system market. Look for more reviews on ATARI games next month in this space but for now as far as sub simulations go, I prefer the ride at Disneyland.



The action is fast and furious in Double Dribble.

Other Ports

By Rusel DeMaria

This month, like something living and breathing, my column is evolving. Last month it was a Macintosh only column. This month I'm including Atari ST products. Next month — who knows?

New on the Macintosh, as I write this, are **Colony** from MINDSCAPE and **Manhole**, a HyperCard game from MEDIAGENIC. Also in this column, I'll look at some new titles from INFOCOM and some of the newer offerings for the ST. **Colony** promises to be one of those intriguing products that develops its own following.

Already, as I write this, with only about 500 or 600 copies of the product out, there is a whole topic of hints and discussion on CompuServe about **Colony**. My own impression is that this game is deceptively simple at first, fascinating, compelling, and difficult as you get into it.

In **Colony**, you crash-land on an outer planet where a colony of humans has been destroyed by strange aliens. Your ship is damaged, and you will need to make repairs before you can leave. Before you repair the ship, though, you will have to solve the mystery of the aliens and accomplish some other tasks that will become clear as the game progresses.

One of the most significant aspects of this game is the way it is played with the mouse. The whole game is in 3D perspective, and movement is entirely by mouse movements. To move forward, you place the mouse cursor anywhere in the upper half

of the screen. The higher you place the cursor, the faster you move. The same principle holds for backward, left, and right movement (or combinations of them). Though this movement method is somewhat tricky at first, eventually you should become adept with it and be able to stop on a dime, so to speak, and move accurately. At first you bump into a lot of walls, but that misfortune should soon end.

MEDIAGENIC has released **Manhole**, which is, in some ways, more an odyssey than a game. In a sort of Lewis Carroll tradition, you can wander through a HyperCard world of dragons, talking rabbits, boat riding elephants, and much more. Climb a giant beanstalk or float in a teacup — don't worry too much about reality. In **Manhole**, reality is flexible. **Manhole** is excellent for young and old alike. The graphics and digitized sounds and voices are really good, and the animation effects satisfying. I found it surprisingly fun. There is no right and wrong in **Manhole**, and that makes the product especially suitable for young children. If you can point and click with a mouse, you can play **Manhole**. The only possible drawback is that it requires about 4 megabytes of disk space, and comes on five disks. That is more a drawback of HyperCard, since stacks don't compress well, than it is a fault of **Manhole** itself. Still, it is priced like any other game, so you get lots of bytes for the buck.

INFOCOM has been experimenting with new ideas in game interaction. Their upcoming titles,

Journey, **Quarterstaff**, **BattleTech**, **Shogun**, and **Zork Zero** each have something unique in the way they play. Also, INFOCOM has chosen the Mac II as a development system, meaning that their new titles will be available for the Mac right away, and will work in color on color Macs. All the new titles include graphics with the story.

Journey is, in some ways, the simplest of the new games. In this game, you don't run into the usual adventure game bottlenecks. Anything you do will further the story (though there are preferred moves if you want to 'win' the game). You play, not by typing in commands, but by choosing from a list of possible actions. You have a party of varying size, and the scene may shift when characters in a party split up. **Journey** reads like a good fantasy novel, and the game play is simple enough for novice adventurers.

Quarterstaff and **Zork Zero** feature auto-mapping systems, so you can move on the map or by entering the standard text commands. In addition, in **Quarterstaff** you may have more than one character in your party, and you make decisions for each. **Zork Zero** is an irreverent romp into the time before **Zork**. This game includes action sequences — more about that in a future column.

Shogun is an exciting title. The graphics are very satisfying, and the game itself is a challenging return to the exotic and dangerous world of ancient Japan chronicled by James Clavell in his novel. I'll be telling you more about **Shogun** in a future issue, including an interview with Clavell himself. New

for Atari ST The Atari ST has seen some excellent new games recently.

Bubble Ghost, while not brand new, is an unusual game from Accolade in which you must blow a bubble through various tricky rooms in a castle. Though you, the ghost, are not at all vulnerable, the bubble is pretty fragile, so great care is required, as well as careful strategy and patience.

DATA EAST brings us **Speed Buggy**, a really fun game where you drive some goofy cars over logs, on two wheels, over jumps and through tunnels. Make it through each leg in time to complete one of several courses. This is a fun game, and well worth having.

RAINBIRD continues to be one of the best suppliers of ST games, and they have released **Black Lamp**, an arcade style adventure, **Knight Orc**, a complex graphic adventure, and soon, **Star Glider 2**.

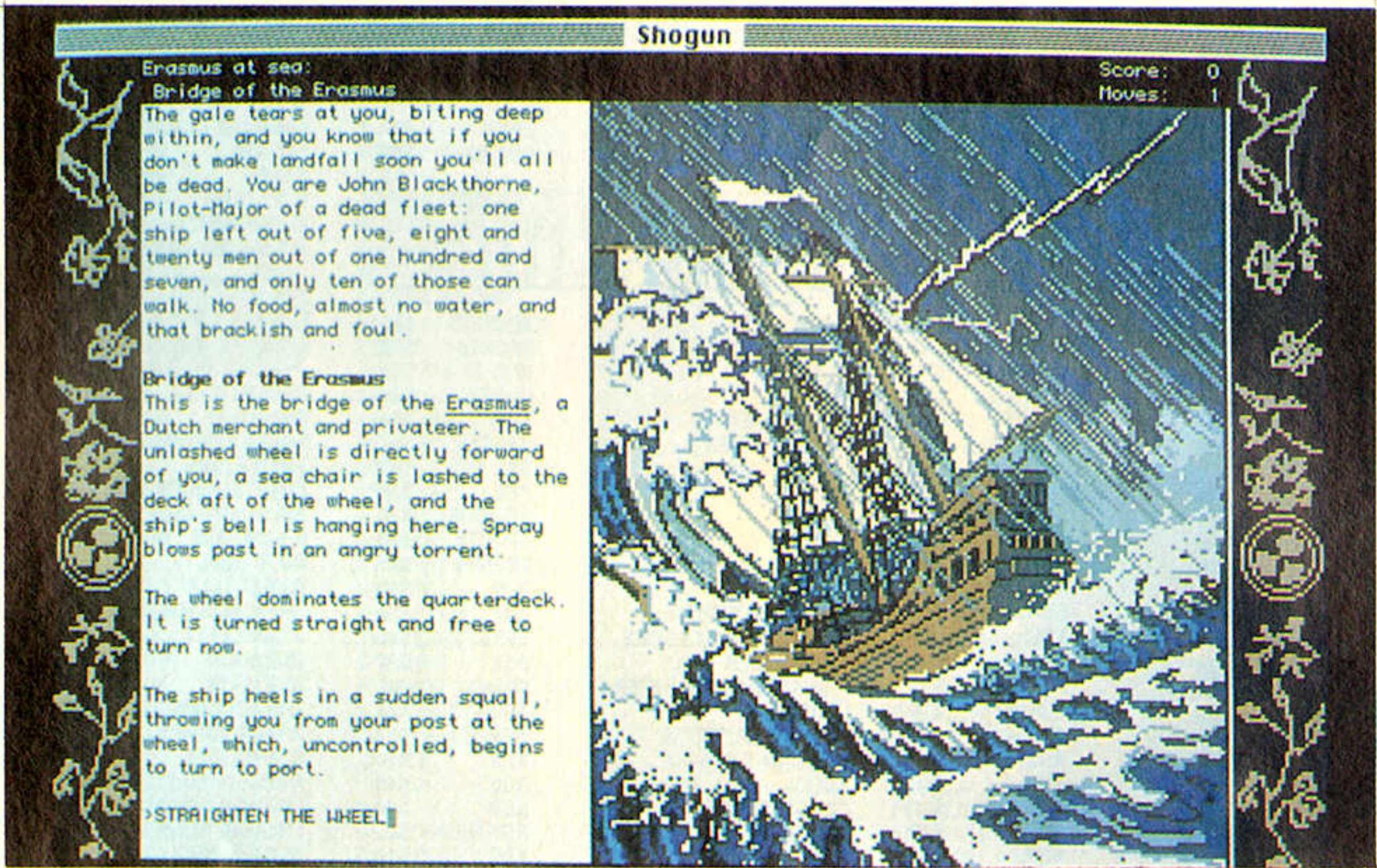
EPYX has released two fine games recently, **Dive Bomber** and **Metro Cross**. **Dive Bomber** is a complex simulation that puts you in control of a prototype torpedo bomber in a mission to help sink the infamous Nazi warship, Bismarck. Although this mission is fictional, the torpedo bomber did exist. You can toggle between a detailed cockpit screen, a map screen, and the actual flight view (front and back). You'll need some practice before you attempt to carry out your mission, and you'll have to get past the enemy aircraft and other obstacles before engaging the Bismarck. **Dive Bomber** isn't a simple game, and you even have to follow proper procedures for successful takeoffs and landings.

On the other hand, **Metro Cross** is a fanciful and light-hearted running game in which you must sprint over some truly odd courses littered with tin cans, high hurdles, green slime, and even skateboards. This is a fun

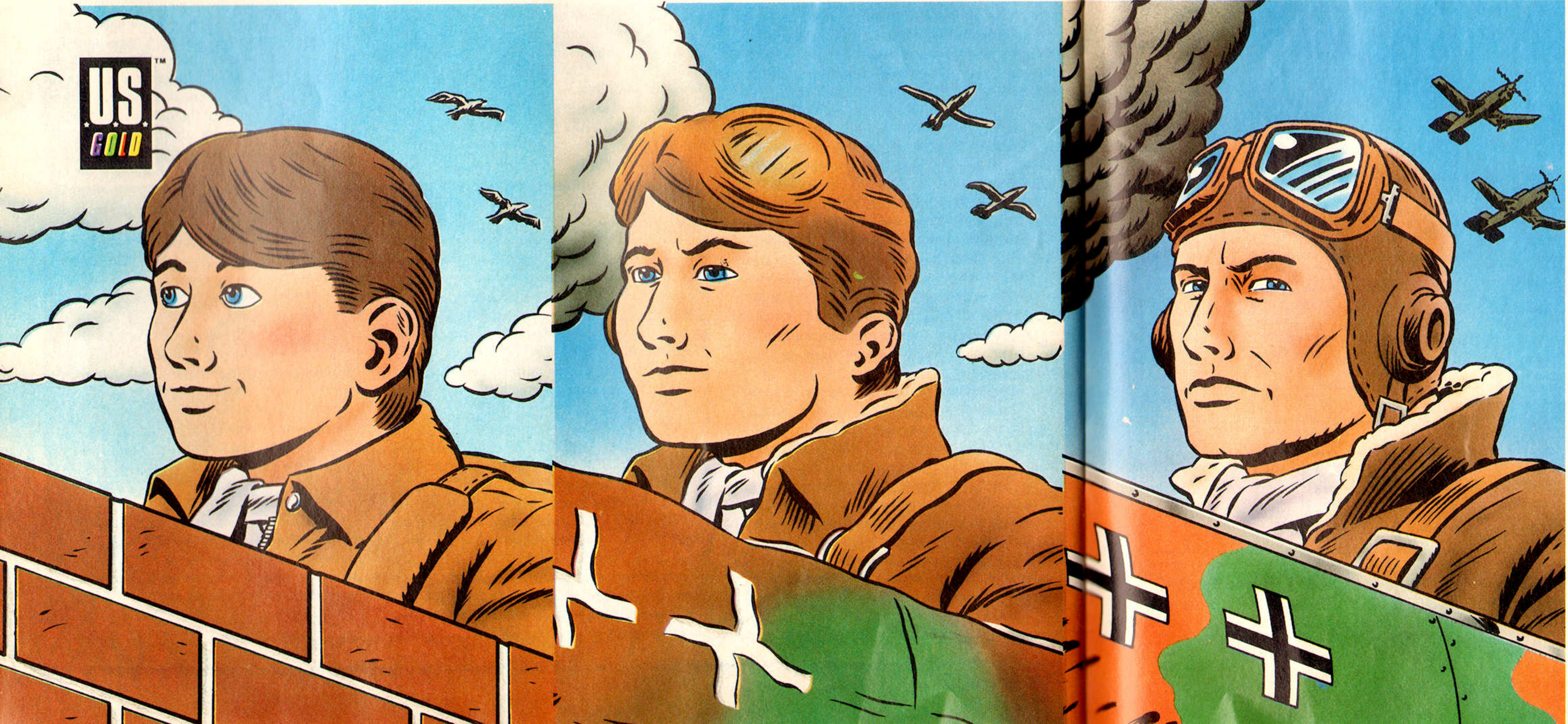
game with different kinds of challenges. For instance, can you hop from one skateboard to another for extra scores? Kick all the cans in a row, or use great timing to flip from one springboard to another? **Metro Cross** is full of imagination as you attempt to set new scoring records and complete more and more advanced courses.

Next month, I'll take to the mountains in Epyx's new

game for the ST, **Final Assault**. Finally, in the **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons** series from SSI, **Heroes of the Lance** puts you in a detailed world of AD&D excitement. I'll try to have more about this product next month. There's really a lot happening in the world of alternate ports. I could go on and on. And I guess I will — next month.



Blackthorne's ship reaches Japan in Shogun.



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Easy to use, fully detailed instrument panel	Of course	Nope
Look of enemy planes & ships	True to life	Stick figure
Pace of enemy attacks	Constant	Lagging
Takeoffs	Breathtaking	Nonexistent
Landings	Brace yourself	Limited

Note: Comparisons are based on current Apple, IBM, and Commodore 64/128 versions of the product. Apple II Series & Compatibles, Atari ST, Commodore 64/128, IBM PC & Compatibles. Screens from Atari ST version of the game. U.S. Gold is a trademark of G.O. America Ltd. Game program licensed from G.O. America Ltd. ©1988 Acme Animation/Gremlin Graphics Ltd. ©1988 Epyx, Inc. F-15 Strike Eagle is a trademark of MicroProse Software.

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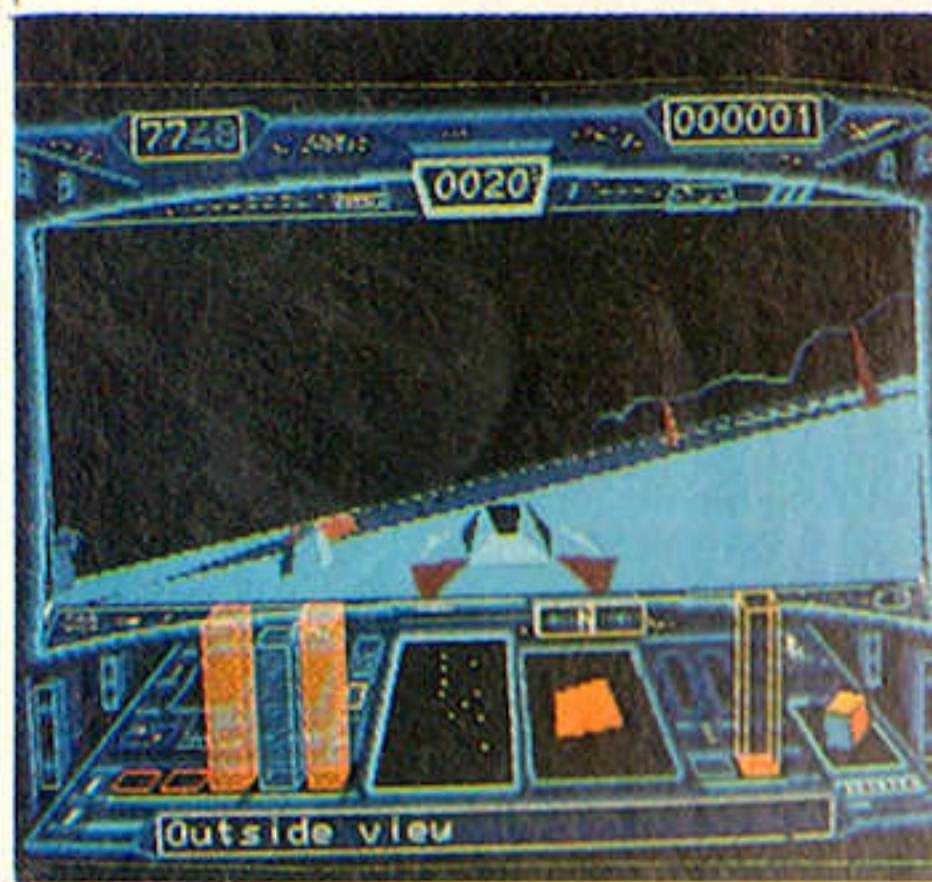
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Snapshots

By Daniel Carr



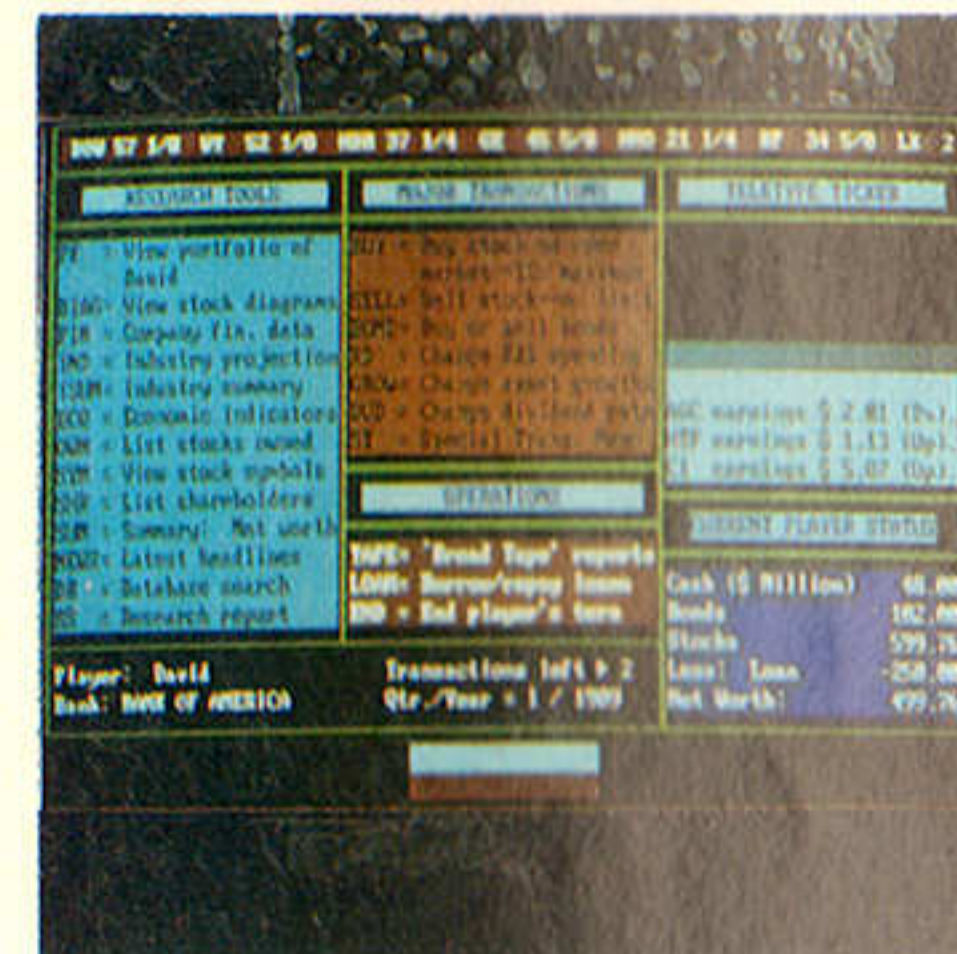
I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU

Street Sports Soccer is a fast action sports game with real life smarts. This soccer the old-fashioned way -- no rules, no uniforms and no Mr. Nice Guy. Choose your stomping ground and use your reflexes to help your team avoid obstacles as you go for the goal on the tough city streets or take a dive in the park. As captain, you can compete with a previously picked team or have the computer randomly select its own. In this game, when all else fails, CHEAT! You can block an opponent's shot, steal the ball and trip or shove the game into a riot. C64/128, Apple IIgs, IBM. Epyx. Circle Reader Service Number 4.



R2D2, HELPI!

Starglider II, is the sequel to Starglider in which you take control of the ICARUS (Interplanetary Combat and Reconnaissance Universal Scoutcraft) and defend the peace and freedom loving peoples of Novenia from the evil and nasty Egrons. Five different weapons are at your disposal including a laser, bouncing bombs, time-warp cubes, fire and flee missiles and a neutron bomb which you will need to blow up the plasma beam the Egrons are constructing to destroy Novenia. Fight pirates, egron fighters, space whales, navigate underground tunnels and trade with the rebels in this fast-paced sci-fi adventure. Amiga, Atari ST, IBM. Rainbird. Circle Reader Service Number 1.



POWERBOAT PSYCHOS

The earth has been totally pacified by UFOs. War and violence have been eliminated. Even sports with the slightest hint of violence are a thing of the past. That's the point at which Off-Shore Warriors begins. Now all the action and aggression that earthlings have been lusting for can be fulfilled. Each player pilots a grotesquely powered boat armed with two missiles to fight it out with other boats on a lake surrounded by thousands of fans. Only one boat will be victorious. Amiga, Atari ST, IBM. Titus. Circle Reader Service Number 6.

MONEY MADNESS

Wall Street Raider is a BIG game. One to four players invest and manage one or more of the 150 companies in 26 industries in a competitive financial environment. GNP growth, oil prices, interest rates, bond prices and housing starts are just some of the economic variables that interact and affect stock prices along with demand in the 26 industries. Explore stock mergers, tender offers, junk bonds and more. It's corporate warfare at its best as you try to bankrupt your opponents and dominate an industry. IBM. Intracorp. Circle Reader Service Number 10.



PASS THE ASPIRIN OR DISK-WIPE

Can you stop the Virus from polluting the Earth? This arcade-style game features startling 3D superfast scrolling graphics with multi-directional movement, contoured landscapes and shadow effects. You fly a hoverplane twisting and turning over a patchwork landscape at high speed engaging in low-level attacks from above and below. You're gonna need your scanners, lasers and homing missiles to fight the killer genes and cleanse the planet. You can use the mouse or keyboard to battle eight different aliens. Amiga, Atari ST, Rainbird. Circle Reader Service Number 8.



FISHING THE HARD WAY

In Dive Bomber, you take control of the torpedo bomber Avenger waiting on the deck of the carrier Ark Royal. Your mission: sink the Bismarck before dawn. You can practice take-offs, landings and torpedo runs. Four screens are there to help. An engineer's screen allows you to prepare the plane for takeoffs, while the pilot's screen lets you fly. The tail gunner's screen lets you shoot tailing aircraft and mines, and the navigator's screen allows you to monitor the enemy and plot flight plans. Atari ST, Apple II. Epyx. Circle Reader Service Number 7.



NINJAS ON PARADE

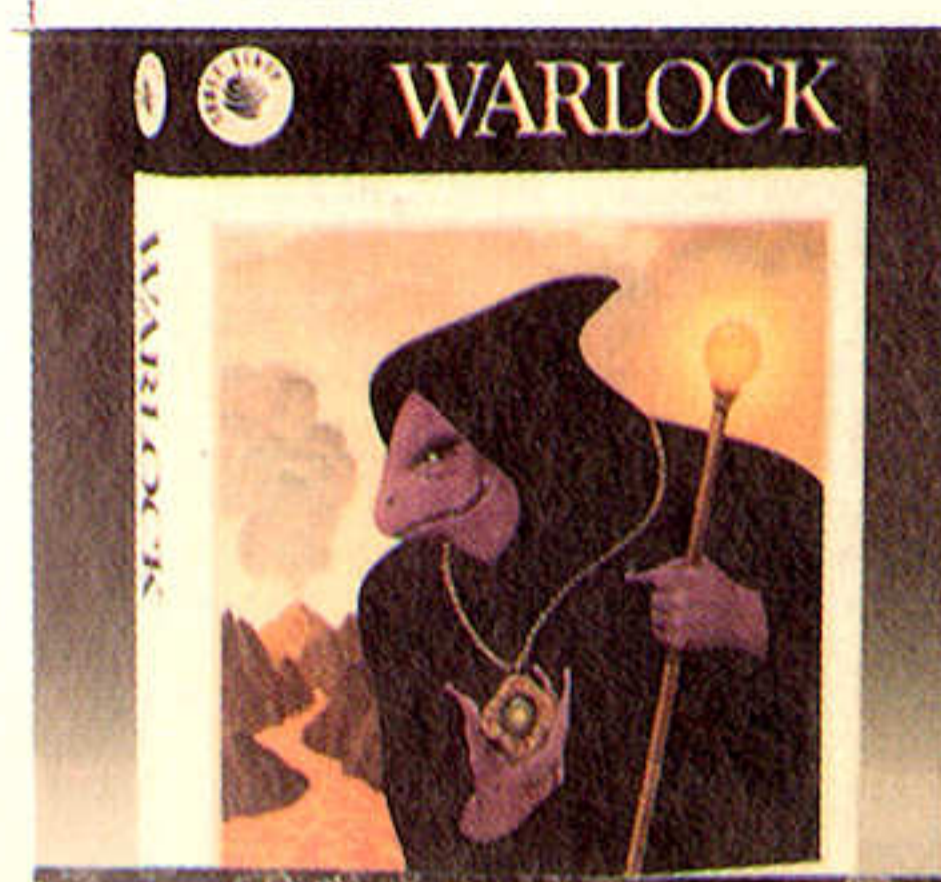
Based on James Clavell's novel, Shogun transports you to 16th century Japan, where you play the novel's hero John Blackthorne, a Dutch sea pilot sailing an uncharted route to Japan. Once there, you find yourself in the midst of a power struggle between two warlords. Your success is based on your ability to make decisions, not solve puzzles. Intricate graphics in traditional Japanese style enhance the story. Apple II, Mac. Circle Reader Service Number 9.



LET THE CLUBBING BEGIN

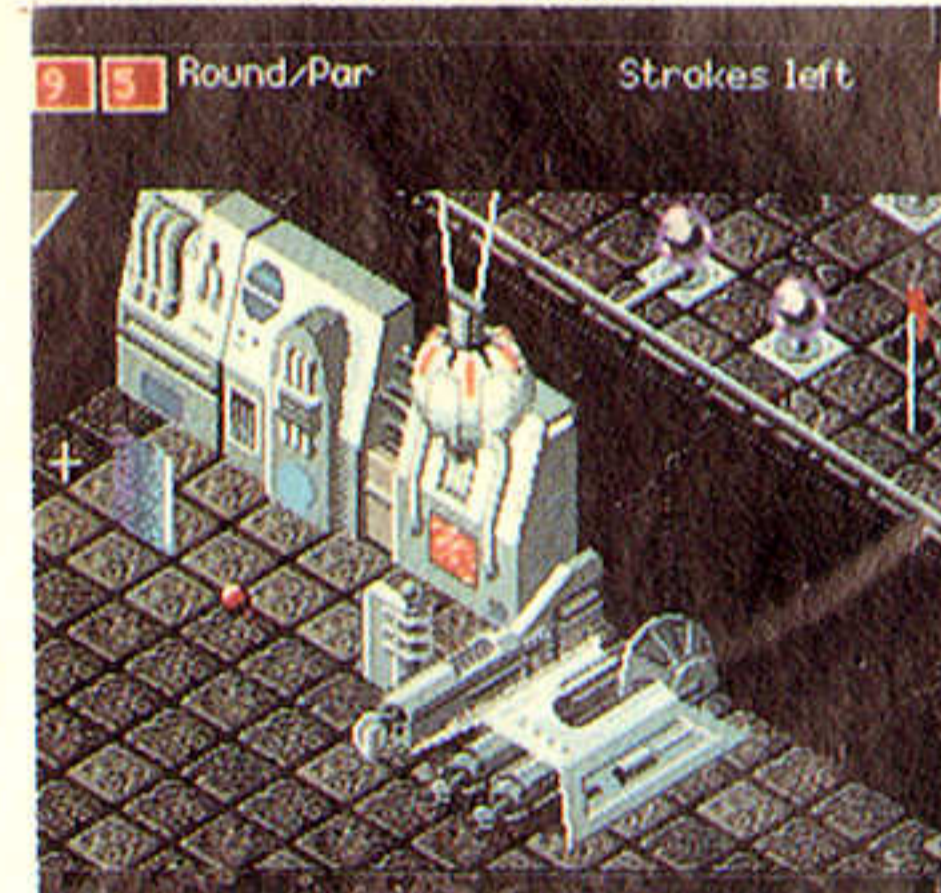
Caveman Ugh-lympics brings together the world's greatest Neanderthal athletes to smash and bash their way to the gold. Choose from six Ugh-ly athletes to compete

in six events. The first is Clubbing with the Knee Swing and Overhead Smash. The second event is the ever-popular Dino Vault where you can either win or become lunch. Next is the Saber-tooth Tiger Race with a bite to the finish. Then there is the Mate Toss with a REAL battle of the sexes. Sparks fly in the Firestarting event. Lastly, there is the Dino Dace. If the beast doesn't run, bash him! C64. Electronic Arts. Circle Reader Service Number 3.



UNDERWORLD QUEST

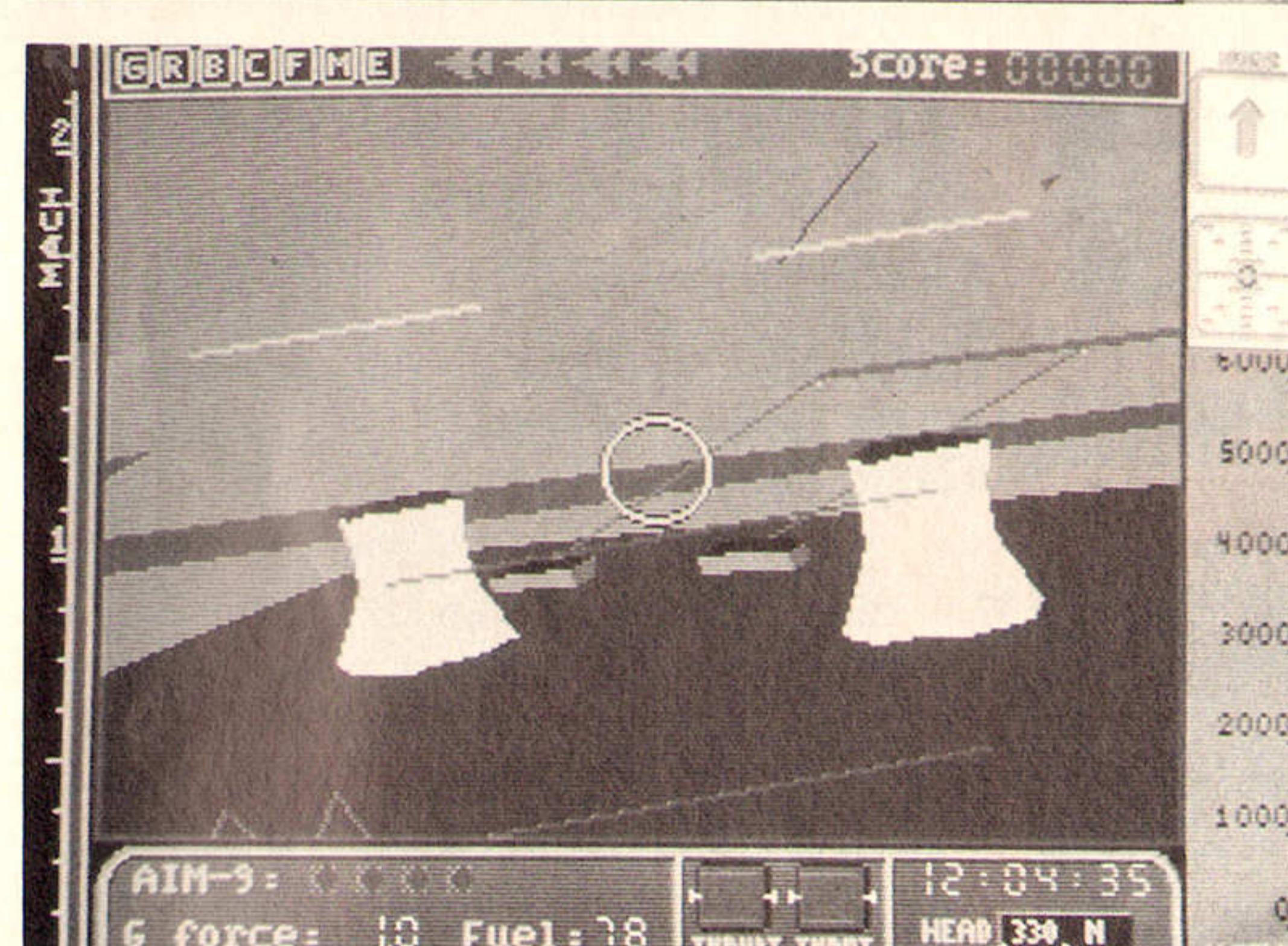
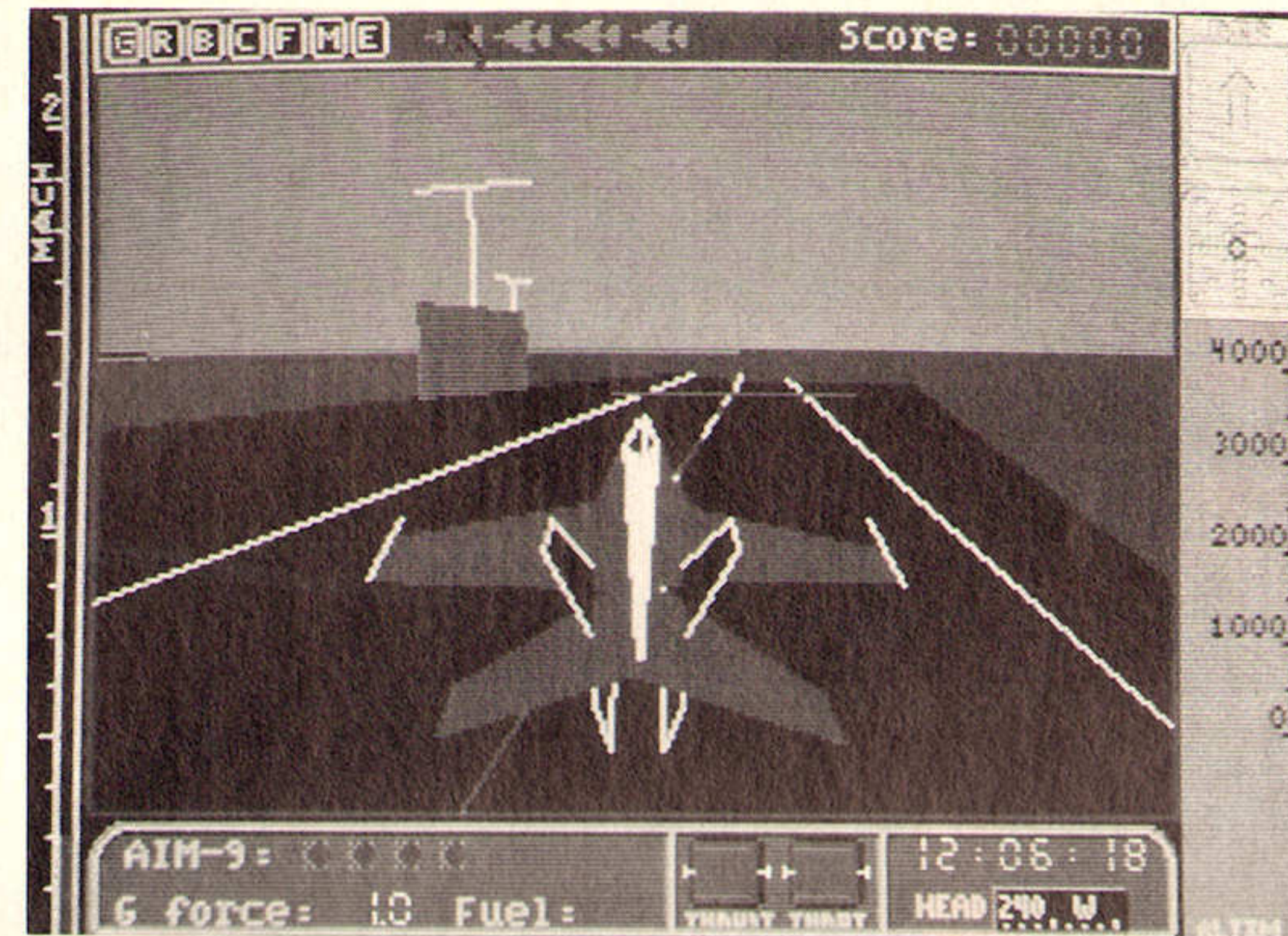
Dive deep into the underworld with Warlock, an arcade-style action adventure. Your quest is to find the stolen "Karna", a precious jewel of the underworld. To do this, you must first collect eight magical objects that are hidden among 20 screens. Only then can you attempt to recapture the Karna from the thief who stole it and is known only as the evil He. Your only defenses are your vitality, power and objects you find along the way. Atari ST, Three Sixty Pacific. Circle Reader Service Number 5.



HAMBURGER HOLE

Zany Golf is a miniature golf game with nine of the wildest (and weirdest) holes for you armchair putters. Putt your way through laser beams, particle rays, moving walls and transporter pads. There's even a hole shaped like a pinball machine with flippers, thumper bumpers and drop-targets. Each hole is different with a rich use of graphics and color plus a full-range musical accompaniment. Amiga, Atari ST, IBM, Apple IIgs. Electronic Arts. Circle Reader Service Number 2.

Next Month: The Games: Summer Edition, Tower Toppler, Airborne Ranger, Strategic Craps, 4x4 Offroad Racing, Fire and Forget, More!



45

tation of a program before I run it, just to get familiar with it. The 40-page JET Operating Manual is deceptively simple. It makes everything look very easy (which it isn't) and leaves out some important information. Despite the many attractive illustrations, I have to consider this a poor manual. While I don't like overly detailed manuals, this one looks great but leaves out too many details you have to discover the hard way.

I would strongly recommend that you spend \$12.95 for Dave Prochnow's "JET: 82 Challenging New Adventures", published by TAB BOOKS (Blue Ridge Summit, PA17214). It is TAB BOOKS #2872, ISBN 0-8306-2872-X. The first four chapters of this book (59 pages) are a valuable supplement to the JET Operating Manual, with lots of screen views under different environments. The rest of the book is loaded with actual historical scenarios from World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and current crises for you to "re-live" with JET. There are also chapters on acrobatics, foreign engage-

ments, Top Gun and breaking records. If you really want to have an almost endless variety of JET "missions" (and really learn how to fly JET) then get this book!

Flying JET

It's easy to get JET started. Boot up, stick the JET disk in Drive A (use a back-up made from the original), type JET for CGA (or JET H for Hercules, JET E for EGA color, JET M for EGA monochrome), press Enter, and you get a beautiful monochrome title page showing an F-16 Falcon. Press Enter and you are presented with the first menu, allowing you to select from 11 display configurations, from color composite to EGA 640 x 350 16 color. Even liquid crystal displays for some portables are supported.

The next menu allows you to select "Keyboard Selection" from IBM PC, PCjr or Joystick. Despite everything I tried, I was unable to get any of my joysticks to respond! I know the joystick port was active, since all other programs operated with the joystick. One explanation MIGHT be that my PC/XT has

BOTH a Hercules and a CGA board installed, and this might be somehow blocking the game port. If so, I've never had this happen with any other program. I tried to use the joystick in both the Hercules and CGA modes, and was unsuccessful. Keyboard control was good, but I'm sure I would have felt more in control with a joystick and would have given a higher score for playability.

The next menu, Operating Mode, lets you select dogfight, target strike, free flight, demo or scenery disk. I suggest you select the demo and just sit back and watch the amazing capabilities of JET. The demo runs 13 minutes, with black, red, white and cyan in CGA. It starts with an external view of an F-16 doing tight maneuvers, with changing zoom factors, then a view through the HUD display while performing a loop over the airfield. Next the demo shows a carrier-based F-18 Hornet go through catapult and a touch-and-go landing on the carrier's slanted deck (although the F-18 lands in the opposite direction than it should!). Next an enemy cruiser is attacked with air-to-surface missiles. You're hit, and you watch a safe ejection as your parachute floats down! Now you go on scenery flights around San Francisco (including buzzing the length of the Golden Gate Bridge, between the towers!), then Niagara Falls (between cliff walls!), Washington D.C., Cape Canaveral, London and Paris. You'll want to watch this demo more than once since some things happen very quickly. ESCape gets you back to the Operating Mode Menu.

There's lots more I could write about JET, but like most of these simulators, they improve in fun as you improve in your ability to control them. Plan on spending many hours to get good at flying JET, especially at the higher skill levels. As the New Yorker responded when a young stranger asked, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?", the answer was, "Practice, My Boy, Practice . . ."

Name: JET - IB-JT1
Type: Jet Fighter Simulator
Formats: IBM PC/XT/AT; Commodore 64/128; Apple II
Publisher: subLOGIC Corporation
Designers: Charles Guy/Bruce Artwick/H. Feugen
Ages: 10 to adult
Requirements: CGA, 128K RAM, 5-1/4" 360K drive
Players: One
Price: IBM - \$49.95; C64/128 & Apple - \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner-Advanced
Packaging: Very Good (7)
Documentation: Poor (2.5)
Graphics: Very Good (8)
Realism: Very Good (8)
Playability: Very Good (7)

CP Rating: 6.58

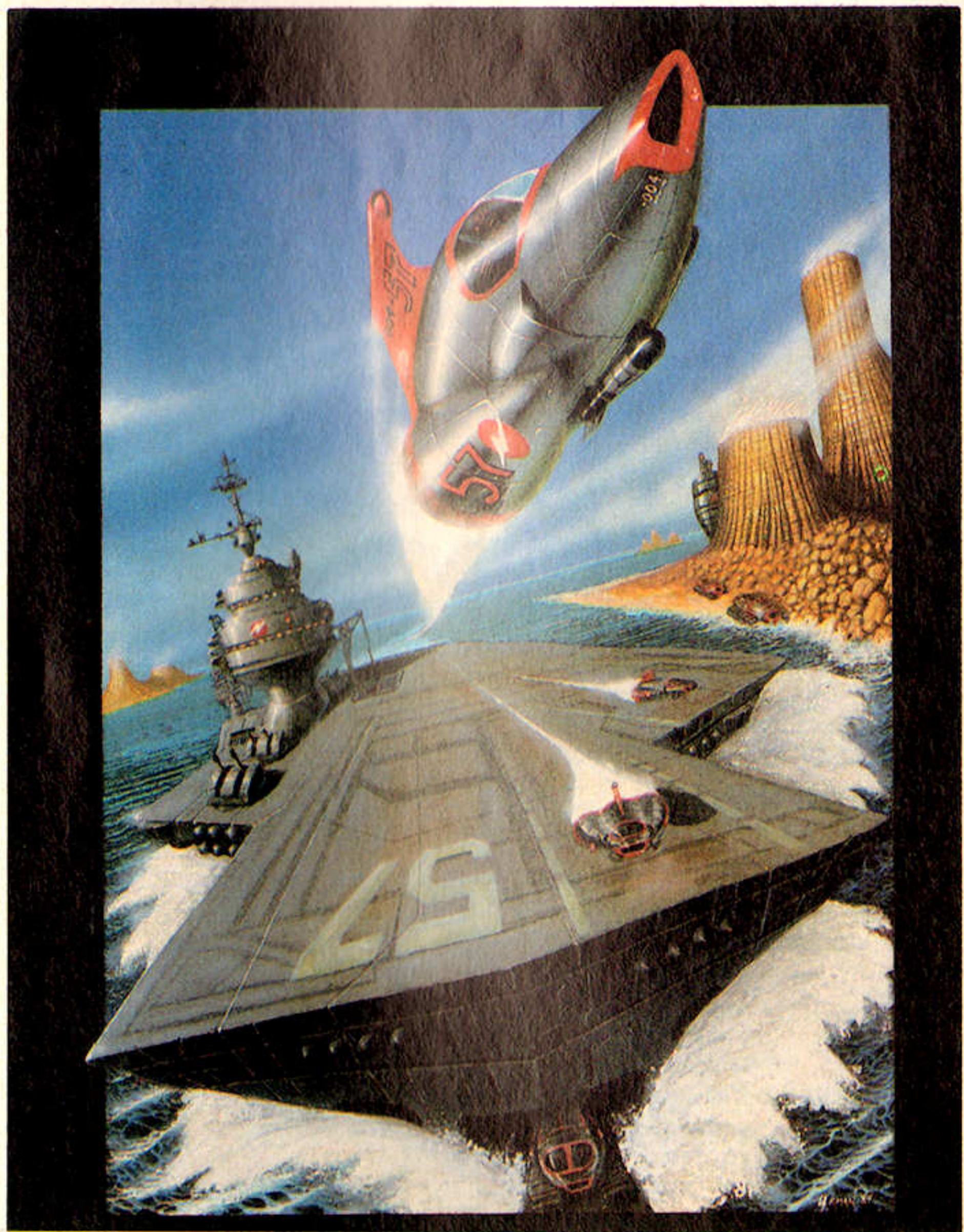
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Coming Attractions

We hope you enjoyed this issue of COMPUTER PLAY and we're happy to tell you that next month looks even better. We'll be including another special section that will feature articles on hardware to enhance your game playing. We'll be looking at color monitors, joysticks and color cards. Also included will be a list of suppliers for each of these products.

On the game front, there's a lot of new titles being released now in time for the Christmas season and we're having a hard time keeping up with them all. Look for a bigger issue in December as we try to fit in everything we can.

You'll find a review of Carrier Command (see below) from Rainbird, the new strategy/arcade hit that's been a blockbuster in Europe and is sure to be here too. A new company, PSI, has just released Cyber Cop, a futuristic arcade/adventure game that Associate Editor Rusel DeMaria will be looking at. Cheryl Peterson gives us a look at the new Apple IIs version of Questron II from SSI and Margot Comstock returns to these pages with an in-depth analysis of Star Saga: One from Masterplay.



Look for Carrier Command on our December cover.



Questron II comes to the Apple IIs.

If you'd like totest your ability in the financial world, first try your hand at Wall St. Raider, the new simulation from Intracorp that Dr. Michael W. Ecker will review. Fred Blechman continues his series on flight simulators with a trial run of Top Gun from MIndscape's Thunder Mountain label.

These are just some of the great games you'll be able to read about along with all of our regular features, so make sure you get your copy, or better yet, get a subscription! See you next month.

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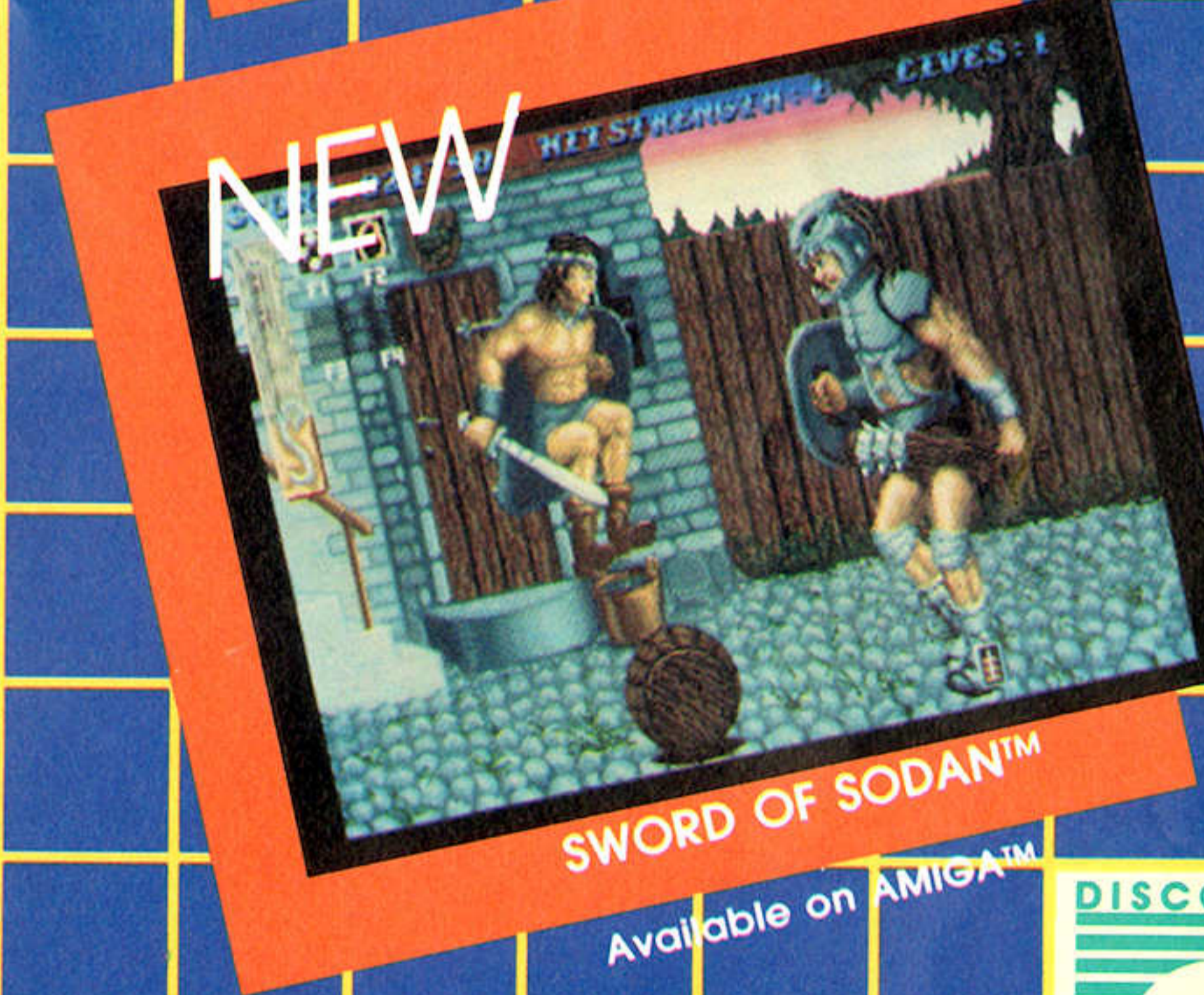
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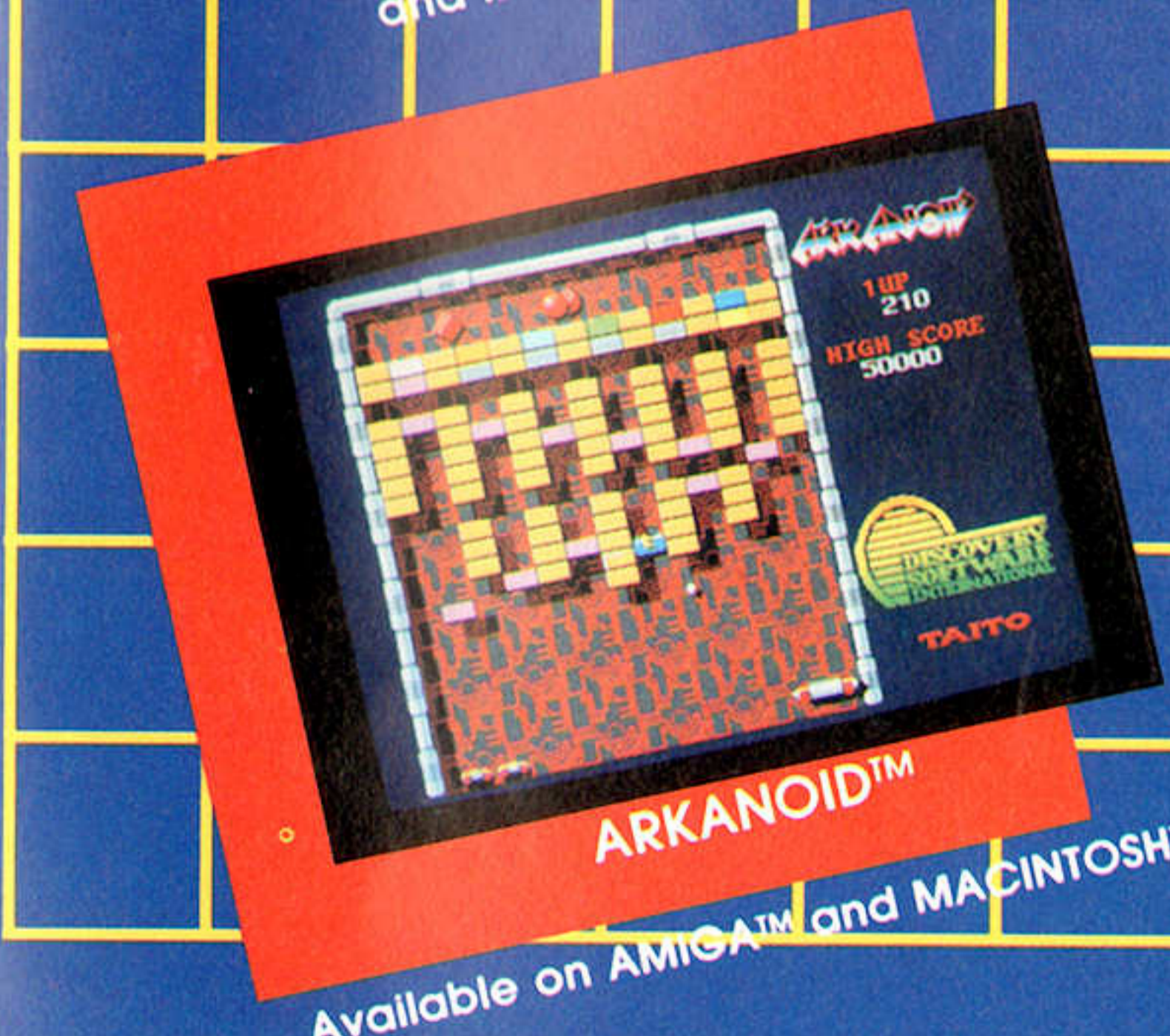
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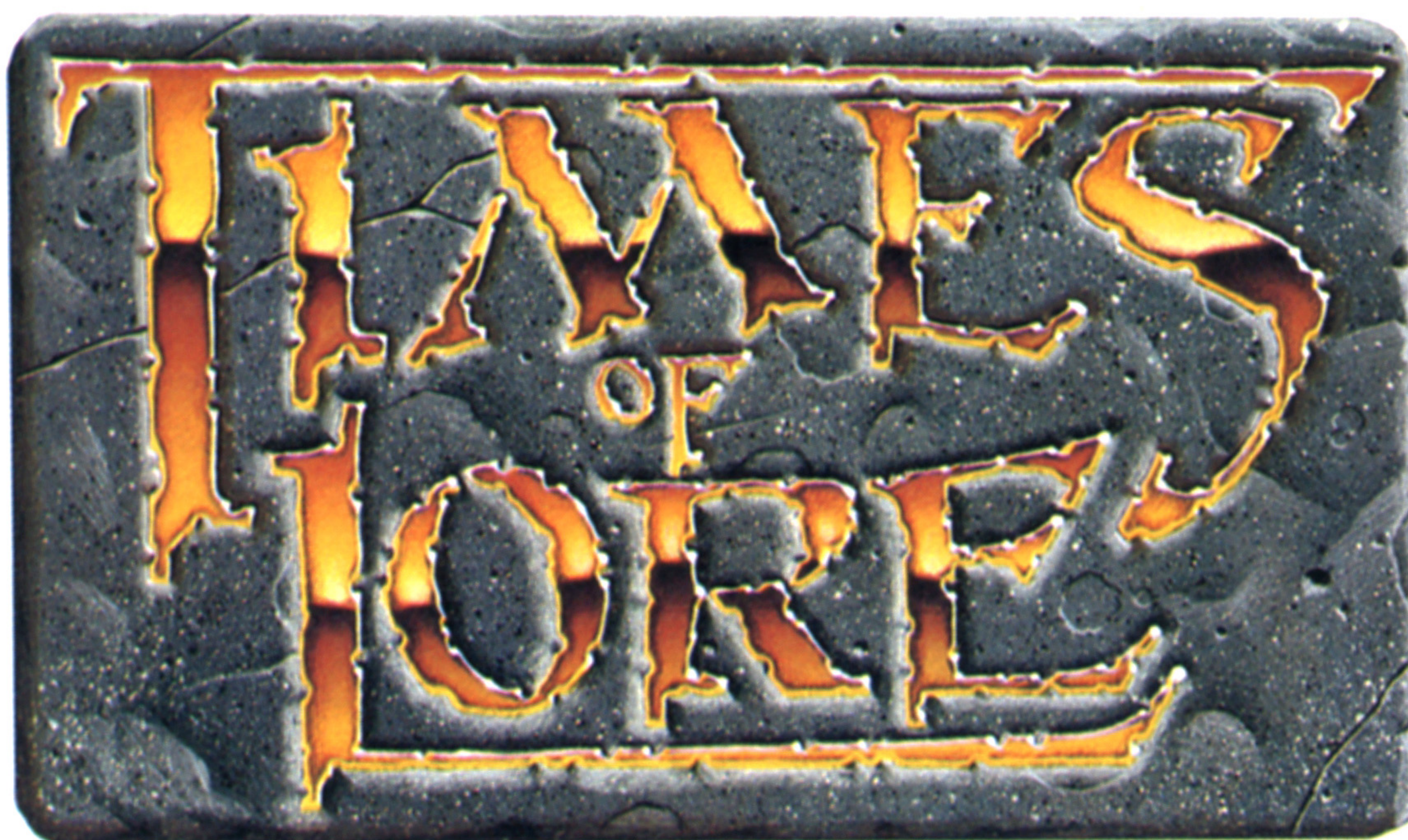
To get your copy of Times of Lore, either
1) visit your local retailer,

2) call 1-800-999-4939 8am to 5pm EST to order by VISA/MC, or

3) mail check (U.S. \$) or VISA/MC#, cardholder name and expiration date to Origin. All versions \$39.95 plus \$2.50 shipping/handling. Allow 1-2 weeks for delivery

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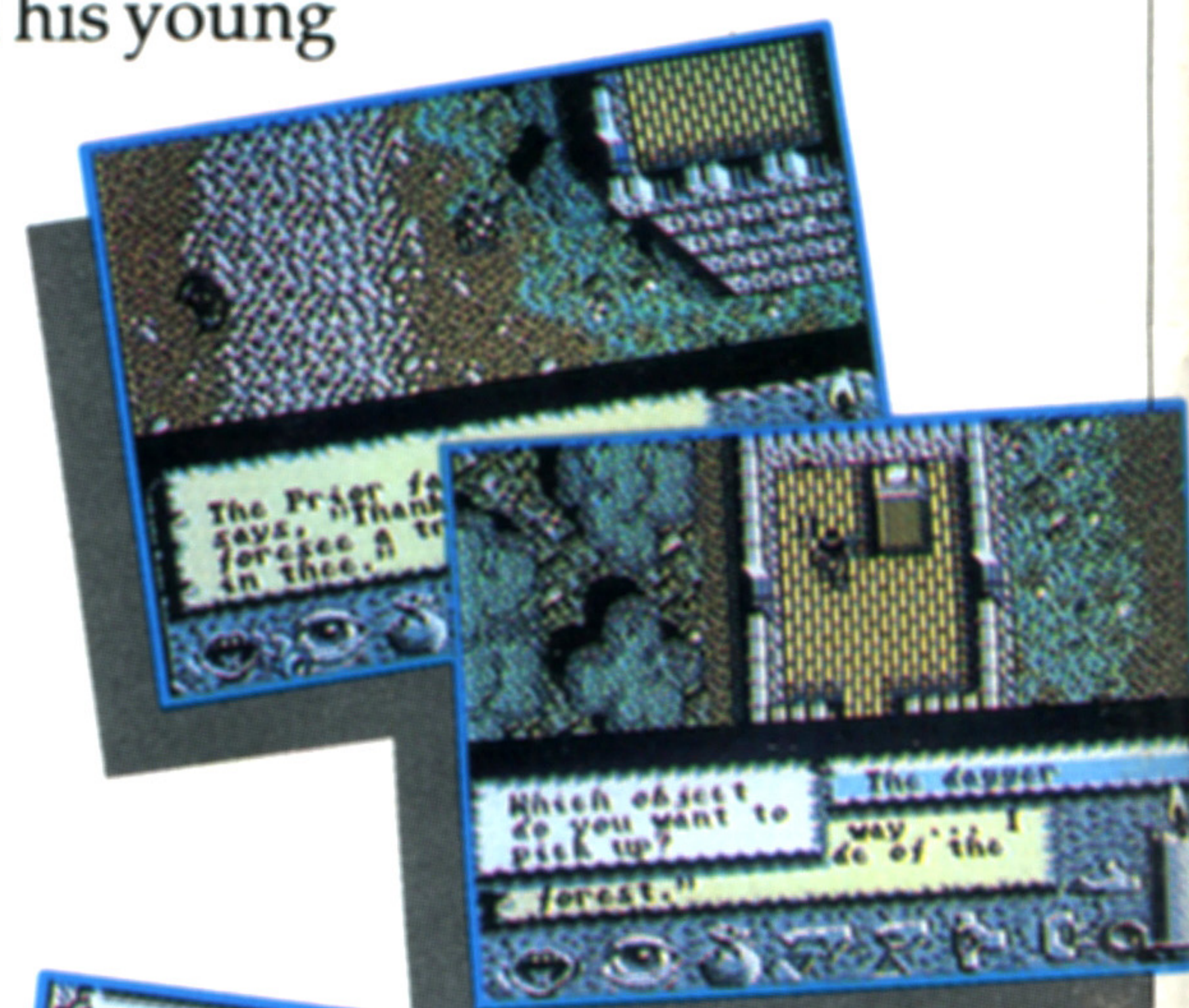
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- Fast-paced combat action
- Dynamic conversations
- Compelling plot



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